Hafa Adai!

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you agree with the $250 million price tag set by lawmakers in the sale of CUC's power plants?

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9 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Posh Retreat

Days after it got a federal bailout, AIG spent $440,000 on a posh California retreat for its executives.

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A-Listers

In the year of "Sex and the City," perhaps it's no surprise that an event honoring women drew some of the biggest names in Hollywood.

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Tourists weigh suit over pat-downs

> *The Chinese tourists were shocked by the way they were treated without any explanation from the DEA agents.*
>
> —Century Tours general manager Ronald Chan

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
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BUSINESS EDITOR

A host of Chinese tourists subjected to intensive body searches by federal agents after arriving Saturday morning aboard Shanghai Airlines' charter flight from China are weighing the prospect of filing a lawsuit over the incident, alleging racial discrimination.

See TOURIST on Page 4

DEA: Marianas meth prices up

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
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BUSINESS EDITOR

Street prices for crystal methamphetamine, one of the most commonly abused drugs in the CNMI, have risen considerably in the Mariana islands in recent years, a trend that in turn has created a wider market for the sale of cocaine, a leading Drug Enforce-

See DEA on Page 4

Report: More than half of PSS students at healthy weight

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Fifty-eight percent of Public School System students are at a healthy weight, according to a new report released by PSS, while 15 percent of students are at risk of becoming overweight.

The 2007 Youth Risk Survey used the body max index, a measurement of height compared to weight, to gather data

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Senate panel wants fewer govt positions

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Pangelinan

The Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee wants to lower the number of full-time employees the government can hire from the House-approved 4,200 to just below 3,800 positions.

Sen. Maria Pangelinan, chairwoman of

See SENATE on Page 4

CULTURE WEEK LILIA KING

Members of the *man'amko* visit the Garapan Head Start Monday morning to teach the children different aspects of the local culture as part of celebrations for Culture Week. The children, ages 3 to 5, were taught how to make *mwars* and sing Chamorro and Carolinian songs. The *man'amko* also took over instructing the children for about an hour, teaching them the alphabet and how to dance.

Local

Ex-Labor staff in bribery case gets no prison term

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Superior Court yesterday imposed no prison term on a former Labor employee who was among eight who were arrested in April on charges they were involved in bribery and conspiracy to forge documents at Labor.

Following a plea agreement, Associate Judge David A. Wiseman sentenced Janel Alepuyo to two years in prison, all suspended, for one count of exploitation of a position of authority.

Wiseman placed Alepuyo on two years of supervised probation and required her to pay a $500 fine, $25 court assessment fee plus annual probation fee.

Upon completion of the sentence terms, Alepuyo's conviction will be vacated.

Wiseman said that, prior to accepting the plea agreement, he requested the CNMI government to state on the record any mitigating circumstances that would persuade him to accept the plea agreement.

Wiseman stated his reluctance to accept a plea agreement with no actual jail time to be served in cases that involve serious illegal acts committed by government employees while working.

Assistant Attorney General Joseph DLG. Taijeron, on behalf of the CNMI government, stated that in view of his discussion with the potential witnesses in this case, it was the government's position that the plea agreement, in lieu of a trial, "would serve the best interest of the government."

Wiseman accepted the plea agreement in view of Taijeron's statement and Alepuyo's lack of any criminal history and the fact that this was a felony conviction.

The plea agreement stated that on Dec. 19, 2007, the defendant received $30 from a person in exchange for the expedited processing of Labor documents for an alien worker. Alepuyo was then an employee at Labor's Application Processing Section.

'Native American designation would bring recognition'

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The head of the Indigenous Affairs Office says he supports the effort by some Guam senators to designate Chamorros as Native Americans.

"It would give us more recognition and public awareness," said resident executive Gonzalo Q. Santos.

Guam senators Judith Guthertz, Benjamin Cruz and Rory Respicio have introduced a resolution urging Guam delegate Madeleine Bordallo to ask Congress to designate the Chamorro people of Guam as the Native American tribe "I'Chamorro Na Taotaogui." Along with the designation, Chamorros on Guam would receive full constitutional citizenship, including presidential voting rights.

If the CNMI were to look into a similar resolution, Carolinians should also be included, Santos said.

The designation could allow the two indigenous groups to benefit from federal funding earmarked for Native American tribes.

Right now there are minimal programs, Santos said, but "lots and lots" of programs could be tapped with the designation.

Security guard gets 6 months

The federal court sentenced yesterday to six months in prison a security guard who admitted selling less than a gram of methamphetamine or "ice" on Saipan.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson gave Greggory Sablan Kalen credit for the time he has already served in jail.

Munson ordered Kalen to serve the balance of his prison term by home confinement. Kalen will be placed on three years of supervised release and required to perform 100 hours of community service.

He was also ordered to pay a $100 court assessment fee. During the probationary period, Kalen is barred from using drugs and drinking alcohol.

At yesterday's hearing, assistant U.S. Attorney Eric O'Malley noted that the defendant accepted responsibility at the early stage in the case. Defense attorney F. Matthew Smith agreed with the prosecutor's recommendation. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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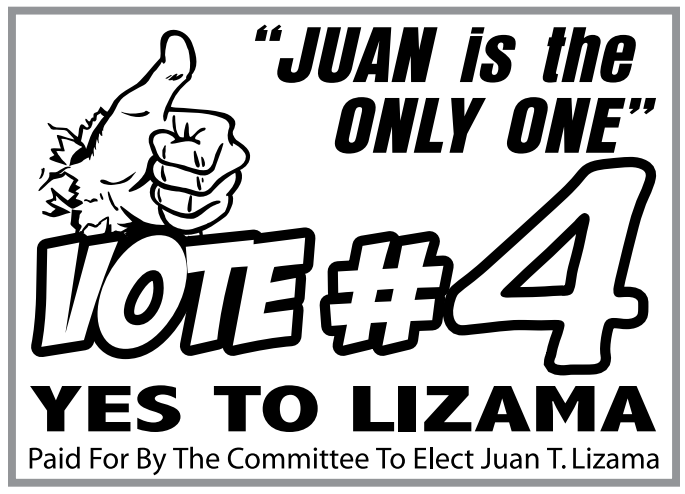

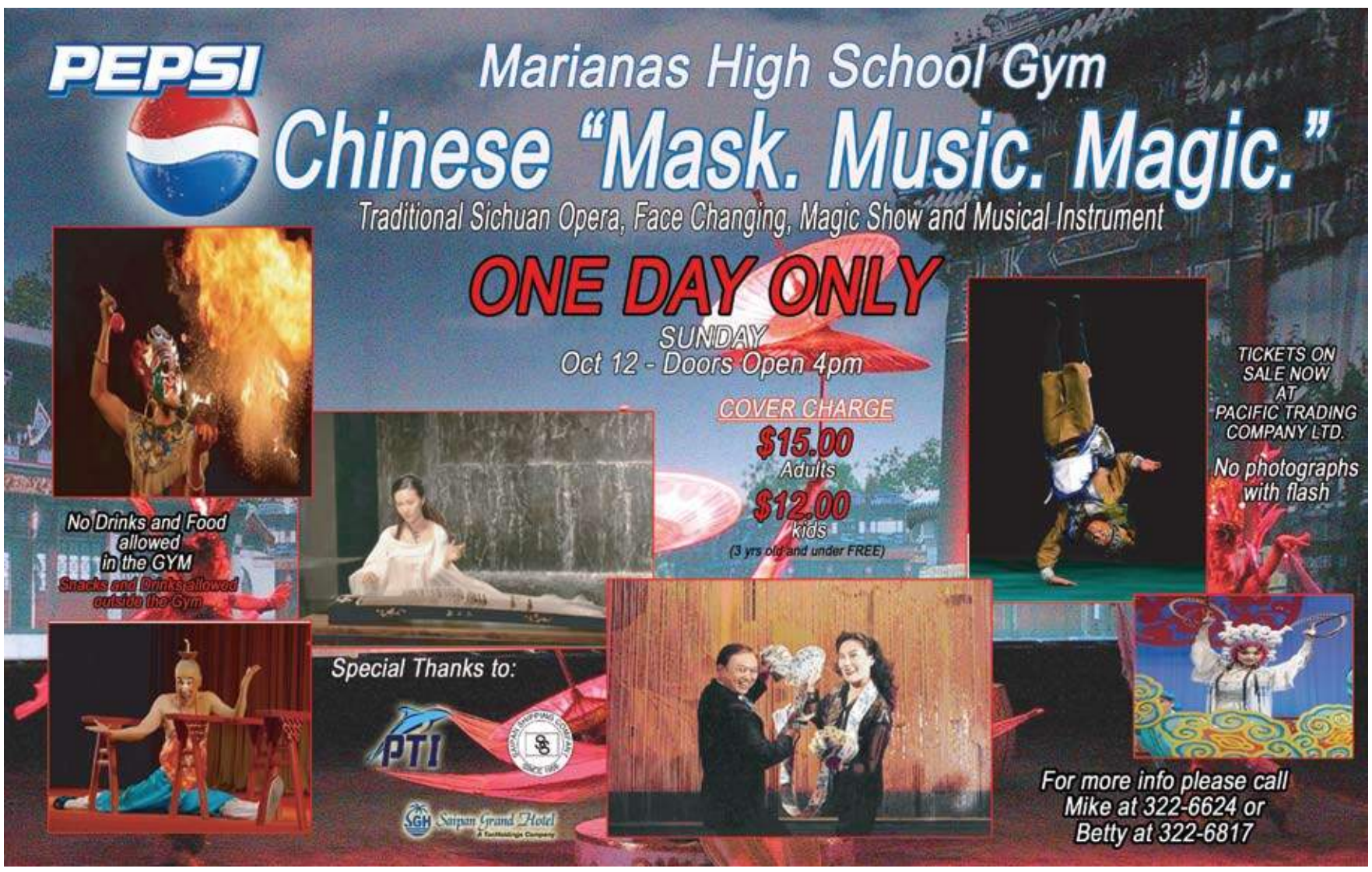
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PUC to share office space with the governor

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The Public Utilities Commission is going to be housed temporarily on the second floor of the Governor's Office, after the agency was unable to find other available space.

"Other agencies have offered [but], unfortunately, people are talking but no one wants to take the initiative and commit," PUC chair Viola Alepuyo said Tuesday night at an emergency meeting for the commission.

The Department of Public Safety offered space but extensive renovations were going to be necessary.

Commissioner Kimberlyn King-Hinds said she was concerned about what the public would think of the regulatory agency sharing space with the governor.

"I have objections in terms of perception. Are we completely independent?" she asked. "Just the perception, I guess."

In the short term, it's necessary and will help move the process along, vice chair Kyle Calabrese said in response to King-Hinds' concerns.

PUC is tasked with reviewing and setting utility rates before the Dec. 31, 2008, deadline set by law. If PUC fails to meet this deadline, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. will be forced to reduce power rates down to 17 cents per kWh—a prospect that will make it impossible for CUC to pay for fuel supply and maintenance of its engines and to pay its independent power producers.

Jim Madan from Georgetown Consulting and Harry Boertzel, the administrative law judge for Guam's PUC, were also in attendance, as the three CNMI PUC members voted on the adoption of rules and bylaws. The two men were hired to help PUC conduct a survey that will be the basis for the rate structure.

Earlier in the day, Madan and Boertzel met with various government officials to introduce themselves.

During the meeting, the three members also discussed the need for an executive director for the commission.

CUC to create new website

Plans are underway to revamp the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s website, saving time for customers and money for CUC.

The new website will list power and water outage schedules, procurement purchases, and allow customers to make online payments, CUC executive director Antonio Muña said.

Because everything will be done electronically, CUC can cut back on personnel, ultimately saving the corporation money.

"It's something we would really be looking at from a cost saving and a time standpoint," Muña added.

There are security concerns, though, he said, adding that things need to be thought through. It is important people will be able to make payments without fear, he added.

A common complaint from customers is the long lines to make payments at CUC's Dandan office, but the website should help people save time, Muña said.

Once CUC meets with a website designer, Muna said things should move along quickly.

"I'm sure we're not inventing the wheel," he added.

The Guam Power Authority has an extensive website. In addition to a rate calculator and an online payment option, the site lists the power rates, current and scheduled outages, procurement bids, frequently asked questions, and audited and unaudited financial statements, among other things.

Also, the site includes information on how to understand the utility bill, as well as GPA's standards and regulations.

In August, Rep. Francisco S. Dela Cruz introduced a bill in the House of Representative requiring CUC to create a website that would allow customers to pay bills online. ***(Kristi Eaton)***

House revives bill requiring Senate OK for appointees to health licensing board

The House of Representatives has again passed a bill designed to require Senate approval for appointments to the Health Care Professions Licensing Board, this time citing the correct law to be amended.

The Legislature previously passed a bill with a similar intent. Gov. Benigno R. Fitial vetoed the legislation because of a technicality. The bill sought to amend the now-repealed law that had created the defunct Medical Professional Licensing Board. The Health Care Professions Licensing Board replaced MPLD in 2007 as the independent regulatory body for medical professionals in the Commonwealth.

On Tuesday, the House voted unanimously to again pass the legislation. The bill is now on its way to the Senate.

Sponsored by Rep. Victor Hocog, the measure seeks to require appointees to the medical board to obtain Senate confirmation. It argues that, "the powers, duties and functions of the board carry great responsibility and importance to the health and welfare of the people of the CNMI. To ensure the integrity and dignity of the Health Care Professions Licensing Board, the Legislature finds that credentials of appointees to the board should be thoroughly scrutinized."

Currently, the licensing board consists of five members appointed by the governor. No Senate confirmation is required.

Under the law, the board must include one dentist, two physicians, and two members from other health care professions. To be appointed, a health care professional must be practicing in the Commonwealth, a CNMI resident for two years, and engaged in the practice of his or her profession for at least five years before the appointment. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

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Detective: Taking Miura to Calif. is overdue

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Rick Jackson, a detective from the Los Angeles Police Department's Cold Case Homicide Unit, who has been involved in the case against Kazuyoshi Miura for 20 years now, said upon his arrival on Saipan Tuesday night that taking the Japanese businessman back to California "is overdue."

As this developed, the Attorney General's Office filed yesterday a motion asking the Superior Court to release Miura's passport so it could begin the process for his extradition.

In a press conference at the Saipan airport attended by dozens of Japanese media, Jackson said he's been involved in the case since 1988, so it's good to get the 61-year-old Miura back to California where the businessman is facing charges for the 1981 fatal shooting of his wife.

"He's never been back there that we know of since the warrant was issued in 1988, so it's overdue and we'll proceed how the courts allow us to," said the detective.

Jackson arrived on island Tuesday, along with detectives Richard Bengtson, Timothy Marcia, and officer Eri Poss.

Except for Marcia, it was the second time for the LAPD detectives to be here. The first was on Sept. 15 but they had to leave empty-handed after the CNMI Supreme Court granted Miura's request to stay the extradition order pending his appeal.

Jackson said that right now the conspiracy charge will remain part of the case and whether or not it is going to be appealed is to be seen by both Miura's defense counsel and the prosecutors.

"We may appeal and see if we can still continue with the murder [charge] as well. We don't know yet," he added.

On Sept. 29, Miura withdrew the petition for habeas corpus that he filed in federal court. Jackson said they wanted to get Miura as soon as they could but at that time, they had a 1988 murder case that went to trial, during which his partner, Bengtson, was in court.

"We actually finished that [trial] on Friday. We got a conviction from the 1988 murder case, which is ironic because that's the same year that we got the warrant for Mr. Miura for the murder and the conspiracy charges in this case. So that was a good win for us," he said.

Jackson said there will be a preliminary hearing in Miura's case, but they're not sure when that would occur.

The detective said they're going to have a meeting with Assistant Attorney General Jeffery Warfield Sr., who handled the extradition case, and other officials from the Attorney General's Office.

"We will be here for a day and a half…a couple of days. We are not sure yet. Things could change with our schedule," he said.

The LAPD detectives were mum as to the day when they will fly Miura to California.

Jackson, however, stated that it is his understanding that there will be a press release later in the week in L.A., indicating their arrival in California.

The detectives said they have not worked out the particulars on how they are going to take Miura or whether he is going to be brought somewhere else.

"We don't know. We are going to work with the authorities here and go by their judgment. They know the system better here. …We work with them," Jackson said.

Once in California, he said Miura will probably be brought to the jail division of LAPD's police headquarters.

"It is not a maximum security facility. He can't walk out from it. It is a regular temporary booking security until he goes to court," he said.

Warfield said they are pleased that the LAPD detectives were able to make it here safely.

"We try to show them some hospitality while they are here the next few days and send them off with Mr. Miura, then it will be over for us," said Warfield, who was among the CNMI officials who met the detectives at the airport.

"We talked to them tonight and set up something for tomorrow. Right now we want to make sure they get some rest because it's been a long trip for them," the prosecutor added.

DEA

From Page 1

ment Administration in Guam said Wednesday.

In a telephone interview, Antonio Marquez, the agent in charge of the DEA's Guam Resident Office, said the street value for a gram of ice in Guam has spiked in the last three years, amid some fluctuations, from $500 in 2005 to as high as $800 now. The price hikes—a symptom of dealers capitalizing on the rising demand for ice among users and the added risks associated with smuggling it into the region—are also affecting the CNMI.

"Usually, what hits here [in] Guam will affect there," Marquez said, adding that as ice prices have gone up, they have become comparable to the street value of cocaine, which previously garnered a much higher price on the streets. The result is that while less cocaine is found in the Mariana islands than ice, cocaine has become an equally affordable high and the market for it has expanded.

"Cocaine is slowly dwindling into the island [Guam] and we've seen some on Saipan," he said. "Ice is the poor man's cocaine and coke's availability is affecting the market."

The DEA has long fought to stem the tide of illegal narcotics like ice and cocaine entering Guam and the CNMI. However, a number of factors have made Saipan a viable market for narco-traffickers, he said, such as the availability of visa waivers from key nations in Asia where drugs are produced, he said. The pending federal takeover of local immigration laws will likely mean tighter security at the CNMI's points of entry and a decline in the availability illicit substances.

"With Saipan, obviously there's a lot of money to be made and the visa waivers make it easier," said Marquez, noting that with tighter federal controls "you're going to be seeing a lot more airport screenings."

But for now, ice continues to cross into the CNMI's borders, he said, smuggled aboard ships and aircraft and delivered through the mail. Much of the ice, he added, arrives from Asian locales like southern China and recent seizures in the CNMI have found that it carries a higher purity level than ice sold in other parts of the region.

"We're trying our best and we appreciate the cooperation we've seen from local authorities to keep it out of the community," said Marquez.

According to DEA statistics, the agency seized more than 1,086 kilograms of ice nationwide in 2007. Meanwhile, a 2005 report by the Centers for Disease Control reveals that 6.2 percent of American students have used ice once or more in their lifetime.

SENATE

From Page 1

the committee, said in a report that the 409 positions proposed for approval in the House-passed budget bill are currently vacant. She added that including them in the fiscal year 2009 budget "will not serve to control hiring."

The largest cuts proposed by the Senate committee will affect the Executive Branch, from the House-approved 1,789 positions to 1,623, and the autonomous agencies that receive money from the central government, from 1,335 positions to 1,071. However, the committee also seeks to increase the FTE level for the Legislature from 240 to 290 employees.

Pangelinan said her committee came up with these figures after conducting a survey of all government agencies to verify the actual number of occupied positions. Most agencies responded to the survey and their FTE allotments were adjusted according to their reports. In the case of those agencies that did not respond, the committee reviewed the individual personnel worksheets in the governor's budget plan.

She noted that the governor's proposal included vacant positions that should be removed from the books, as required by law. It also included some currently vacant positions that were funded in anticipation of filling the positions. The Senate committee believes these positions should not be funded.

In an interview yesterday, Pangelinan said the Legislature should cut personnel costs wherever possible, and strive to fund operations to the maximum. "Funding services benefits all persons in the CNMI and, therefore, is a better option than supporting the economy through public employment," she said.

The Fiscal Affairs Committee is expected to introduce its substitute bill on Wednesday, Oct. 15, 2008.

TOURISTS

From Page 1

At issue in the tourists' complaints is an operation led by Drug Enforcement Administration agents upon the arrival of the Shanghai flight at Saipan's airport Monday. Tour operators report that agents corralled 147 of the 187 passengers on the flight into a small room and searched even the most private parts of their bodies, in addition to searching every piece of checked and carry-on luggage they carried.

Many of the passengers reported feeling violated and some even promised never to return to the CNMI. Travelers have already filed the first of what tourism officials expect will be many complaints over the episode—which resulted in a more than three-hour delay for them at the airport—with Chinese travel agents, according to one hotel operator, and local officials are fearful it will damage the CNMI's reputation in key Asian market for its struggling tourism industry.

"The Chinese tourists were shocked by the way they were treated without any explanation from the DEA agents," Century Tours general manager Ronald Chan, a passenger on board the Shanghai flight, said in a statement. "Through my own experience, you can see how the DEA treated us upon arrival."

Chan reports that after reaching the customs desk at the airport, a DEA agent stopped him without telling him why.

"Then he isolated me in a small room … and asked me to face the wall and put my hands up on the wall," Chan said. "He then proceeded to frisk me up and down my body—I was so shocked by what was happening—which included him touching my private parts three times. I must emphasize that he never asked me or would tell me what was going on."

Among the passengers, only the Chinese tourists saw this kind of scrutiny, he added, and some are now poised to file suit over the incident.

"Some of them complained that the agents inserted their hands between the tourist's underwear and their body," said Chan. "The tourists were visibly insulted by all of this and are going to consult an attorney to seek a complaint regarding violations of their human rights and race discrimination. This search and treatment by the agents was only carried out on the Chinese tourists."

However, a leading DEA agent in Guam in an interview Wednesday said the airport searches seen on Saturday are commonplace on America's mainland and an integral part of the agency's efforts to intercept narco-traffickers. The operation was also conducted well within the DEA's legal authority, he added, and international travelers are often subjected to far more intensive treatment in other nations.

"This is nothing new," said Antonio Marquez, the agent in charge of the DEA's Guam Resident Office, adding that the agency has conducted such searches throughout the United States for more than 30 years. "As we are picking it up on Guam doing this, we're going to be doing the same thing [in the CNMI]."

Marquez took issue with the suggestion that passengers were selected for the searches based on race and noted that although the searches found no illegal drugs, early reports suggest some contraband items such as illegal plant and animal products were intercepted during the operation.

"There was nobody specifically targeted, absolutely not," said Marquez. "We don't intentionally do that. My agents and task force officers are professionals. I think [the accusations] are because of the fact that people just are not used it."

Narcotics smugglers, he added, often attempt to bring drugs across borders on flights that arrive in the early hours of the morning in a bid to catch customs officials off guard and searches like those on Saturday are critical to curbing the flow of crystal methamphetamine into the CNMI.

"For over 20 years, ice has devastated these islands," he said. "There was no bad intent. We're just trying to do our jobs."

Meanwhile, the tourism industry in the CNMI is already seeing the initial blowback over the searches from Chinese visitors. Tom Liu, one of the proprietors of the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino, a resort that caters to many Chinese tourists, said complaints from travel agents are beginning to surface as some of the passengers who were on board the flight have returned to China. Liu noted the incident could harm the CNMI's image as a travel destination there.

"We are concerned about the reaction from the tourists and the travel agencies," he said. "What if they decide not to promote the CNMI?"

REPORT

From Page 1

on 9,048 students in the school system from August 2007-June 2008.

In the entire school system, 20 percent of students are overweight while 7 percent are underweight.

High schools had the highest number of students at a healthy weight at 61 percent, while elementary schools, at 22 percent, had the highest number of overweight students.

According to the report, there have been several improvements in risk factors that lead to obesity, including the amount of time students participate in physical activity. Also, there was a slight decrease in the percent of students who choose unhealthy practices—such as vomiting, taking laxatives and starving—to lose weight.

Nearly 70 percent of PSS schools teach healthy eating practices like how to read food labels and choosing foods low in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol. Half of schools do not sell candy or soda or fruit drinks that are not 100 percent juice. In addition, half of schools do not sell baked goods or salty snacks that are not low in fat.

Oleai Elementary School, according to the report, banned candy and other high sugar content drinks or ice candy. Four elementary schools—William S. Reyes, San Vicente, Gregorio T. Camacho and Sinapalo—integrated cooking demonstrations into their science, math, language arts, and social studies courses.

Eighty-three percent of schools teach students about proper physical activity and 80 percent offer intramural activities or physical activity clubs. Tinian Junior High and High School, for example, allows students before and after school access to physical activity resources like ping-pong rooms, tennis and basketball.

WEIGHT STATUS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
55 percent at healthy weight
22 percent overweight
14 percent at risk of becoming overweight
9 percent underweight

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
60 percent at healthy weight
17 percent overweight
15 percent at risk of becoming overweight
8 percent underweight

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
61 percent at healthy weight
18 percent overweight
17 percent at risk of becoming overweight
4 percent underweight

Time is running out on Pai's confirmation

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The Legislature has 10 days from today to act on Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's nomination of Mike Pai for public auditor, or it will expire and the governor cannot reappoint him.

Pai was named to replace Michael Sablan as public auditor on July 22, 2008. The Senate and House of Representatives have 90 days from then—or until Oct. 19, 2008—to confirm the appointment. To date, neither house of the Legislature has taken any action.

House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios said he ordered the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations yesterday to work with the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations on Pai's nomination. Palacios attributed the delay to an oversight in the House, and said the matter is now on top of the House's priorities.

The Fitial administration yesterday reaffirmed its support for Pai, and called on the Legislature to confirm his appointment. "We believe there is no legitimate basis to reject Mr. Pai. He meets all of the professional qualifications and his character, reputation and integrity cannot be besmirched," said press secretary Charles P. Reyes Jr.

Although concerned by the uncertainty about his position, Pai said he is running the Office of the Public Auditor "like it is business as usual."

'I'm just taking it in stride," said Pai. "I was appointed by the governor, and I consider it an honor. I would like to get confirmed. If it doesn't happen, I guess they would like to have another public auditor."

Mike Pai

If the Legislature does not confirm Pai by Oct. 19 and the governor allows Pai's nomination to expire, Pai cannot be re-nominated for the job. The governor could prevent this from happening by retracting the nomination and resubmitting it—in the process, giving the Legislature another 90 days to act on it.

Pai has been a certified public accountant for more than 20 years. He attended the University of Hawaii, where he completed degrees in engineering and business administration.

Before putting up his own accounting firm in 1986, Pai worked for a number of corporations and an accounting firm, including the Hawaiian Telephone Company, Micronesian Telecommunications Corp., and Ernst & Young.

He is currently involved in several businesses, including Chong's Corporation and Sunset Cruise Inc. on Saipan, Plexus International in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Universal Air Supply Inc. on Guam.

Pai is also active in community activities, serving as member of the CNMI Board of Accountancy, the NMI Judiciary Historical Society, and the Pet Assistance & Welfare Services group. Pai was also a president and a board member of the Rotary Club of Saipan, and was a board member of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

NMC sends student rep to Okinawa Exchange Program

To further promote the exchange of knowledge and experience between the college and its Pacific Rim counterparts, the Northern Marianas College will be sending a student representative to Okinawa to participate in an exchange program designed to advance regional dialogue.

NMC sophomore Charmaine Hofschneider will be in Japan Oct. 8-15 to participate in the Okinawa-Pacific Educational Network Initiative. The program aims to provide students from the Pacific region with opportunities to learn about various economic, social, and environmental issues in Okinawa through field trips and exchange activities with local students.

"I'm excited to be meeting and learning from many other students with diverse backgrounds," said Hofschneider. "While I look forward to sharing many of our issues with them, I also anticipate that I'll bringing back a wealth of new knowledge that I can share with others here."

This year's exchange program will focus particularly on environmental and energy issues. Included on the agenda are meetings with environmental specialists and utility representatives as well as visits to a desalination center, a landfill project, and a river dam.

"The focus of this year's program is very timely and relevant especially for the CNMI," said NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez. "We are extremely proud of Charmaine—we are confident she will make a great ambassador of the college."

The OPENI Program is funded by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and administered by the Center of Asian Pacific Island Studies at the University of Ryukyus in Okinawa. In addition to the Northern Marianas College, the University of Guam, the Guam Community College, the College of the Federated States of Micronesia, the College of the Marshall Islands, and Palau Community College will also be sending student representatives.

Hofschneider will be accompanied by Bonnie Royal of the college's Cooperative Research, Extension and Education Service department. ***(NMC)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NMC student Charmaine Hofschneider, center, will be traveling to Japan for the Okinawa-Pacific Educational Network Initiative. With her in the photo is NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, left, and Bonnie Royal, NMC CREES staff member.

TGIT returns to Club V Thursday nights

Starting today and every Thursday thereafter, the Club V at Saipan Grad Hotel will be transforming itself to offer a different kind of music focusing on island and retro.

Responding to customer suggestions, Club V is now offering a revamped "TGIT." This time, the acronym means "Thursday Grand Island Tunes," to be held every Thursday night from 9pm to 1pm.

It will feature reggae, house, and dance hall music, with in-house DJ Jeyrock manning the turntables. There will also be a chance to do the cha-cha and boogie and to shimmy to the retro beat of 80s and 90s pop. Oscar Yema, Saipan Grand's events manager, said that TGIT will also feature music for ballroom dancing aficionados.

Fernando Ureta, assistant F&B of Saipan Grand, said they opted to do this to give their loyal patrons a chance to relax and unwind at the end of the day. "This is something different and is part of our efforts to keep Club V always fresh," he added.

The entrance fee is just $5 each, with two complimentary drinks (a beer and a shot). There will also be free chasers (while supplies last).

Ureta said all domestic beers are priced at just $3 each, while other drinks have regular prices.

Events manager Yema said that after tonight's TGIT, the next four succeeding Thursday will have a pre-event program from 7pm to 10pm featuring the Saipan Singing Superstars series of performances.

TGIT is sponsored by PTI. ***(PR)***

BUSINESS NEWS
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Taxi group chief: New fares will attract riders

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
stefan_sebastian@saipantribune.com
BUSINESS EDITOR

Responding to criticism over a new plan to reduce taxi fares, the president of the Saipan City Taxi Association is urging cabbies on the island to consider the prospect that it will attract new taxi riders.

On Monday, the Saipan City Taxi Association introduced a plan to reduce fares by 50 percent between 10 am and 10:30 pm. The move comes after DFS Saipan last month dropped a program providing commissions to taxi drivers that bring shoppers to its Garapan complex.

However, taxi association president Rabby Syed in an interview Wednesday said cab drivers that work out of hotel have faulted the reduced fare plan, saying it will cost them money. Syed answered those concerns, noting that the plan will change the public image of the island's taxis.

"Right now, some customers have the idea that taxis are very expensive on Saipan," he said. "In general, our market doesn't know about this plan. People should know that the taxis are cheap and they should ride taxis."

Syed added the reduced fare plan is an experiment that will last three months. During that time, he added, drivers will have a chance to determine whether the lower prices have attracted more customers.

Meanwhile, Syed said the change in fare prices is key to the survival of Saipan's taxis during the island's recent economic downturn.

"This program is designed for everybody in the community," he said. "I'm asking all the taxi drivers right now to please be patient as we do this experiment. These are hard times and there's no need to place blame on each other. Instead, let's try to figure out together what's a suitable solution."

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Bill seeks to expand regents' hiring powers

The Northern Marianas College board of regents will have free rein to decide the term of the college president under a bill passed by the House of Representatives.

The House members voted 16-0 on Tuesday to approve legislation providing the NMC board of regents with full autonomy in hiring and retaining the president of the college.

Rep. Stanley Torres, who has been in legal dispute with NMC management, abstained from the vote. Representatives Rosemond Santos, Joseph Reyes, and Edwin Aldan were absent.

Existing law authorizes the NMC board to appoint and terminate the college president, as well as establish his or her salary level. However, it also limits the initial appointment to a two-year term, with a possible two-year extension.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges' Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges has recommended an amendment to this law. WASC-ACCJC, which has threatened to terminate NMC's accreditation, wants the college to be governed by "an independent policy-making body that is capable of reflecting constituent and public interest in board activities and decisions," the bill states.

The bill adds that, by providing the NMC board with the authority to determine the term of the college president, the Legislature will assist NMC in complying with accreditation requirements. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

Ex-convict nabbed over CK beating

Police have arrested an ex-convict who is the second suspect in the reported beating of a man whom they followed from San Vicente and beat up in front of his house in Chalan Kanoa.

Police picked up ex-convict Roland Martin in San Vicente.

The Superior Court imposed a $3,000 cash bail for Martin's temporary liberty.

Preliminary hearing was set for Oct. 15 and arraignment for Oct. 20.

The victim, Emmanuel Pamintuan, suffered a cut on the nose, bruising on the face, and swelling on the forehead and right temple.

Responding police officers first arrested one suspect, Martino M. Omelau.

Detective Joaquin Deleon Guerrero stated in his report that the bearing happened last Thursday midnight along Texas Road in Chalan Kanoa.

Police said Pamintuan had just gotten home when another car pulled up into his driveway.

Two men, identified later as Omelau and Martin, got out from the car and told Pamintuan to leave.

The victim told the two that he was on his property and that they should be the ones to leave instead.

The victim said he doesn't remember what happened next, but that he was hit on the head and face by the two suspects.

In November 2005, Martin pleaded guilty to assault and battery. He was sentenced him to one year in jail, all suspended except for 40 days.

The factual basis of the agreement stated that on July 19, 2005, Martin struck a woman with a metal spoon. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends that ladies over 20 years old should start getting Clinical Breast Exams (CBE).

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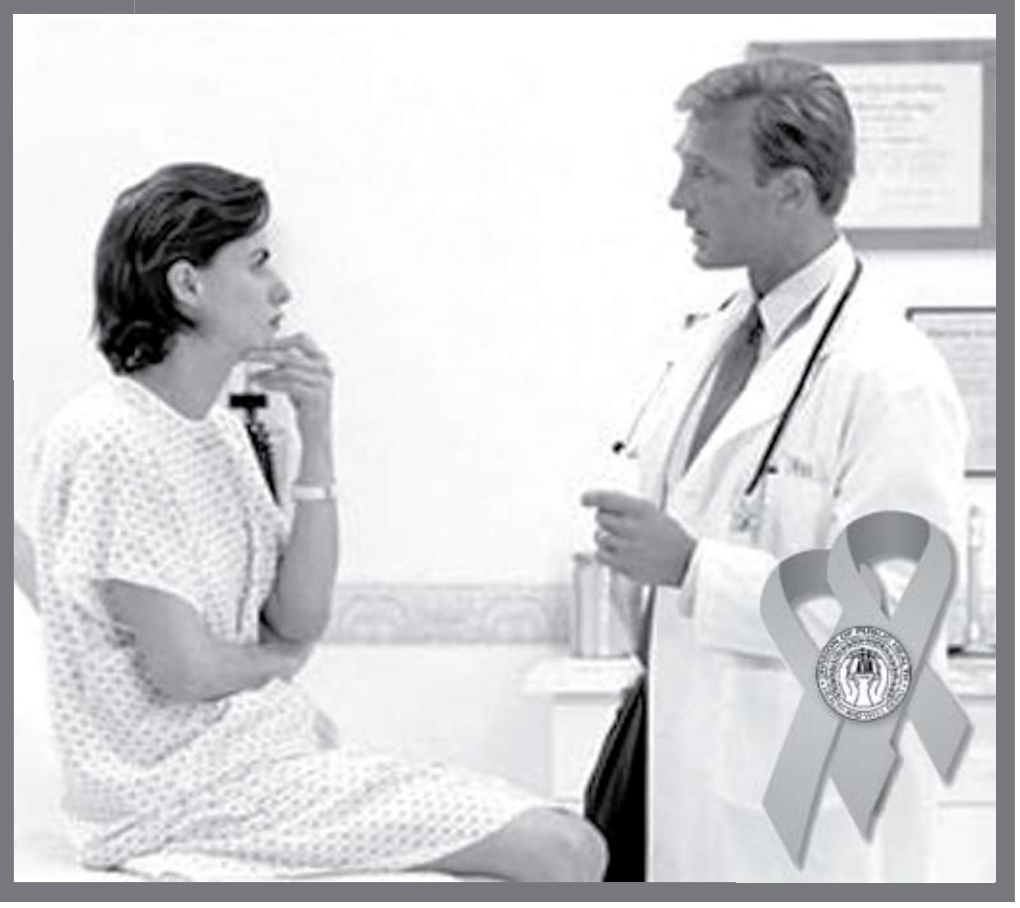

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Coast Guard issues water safety reminder

HAGATNA, Guam—The U.S. Coast Guard is reminding swimmers to take all possible precautions when taking to water to ensure their safety.

This came about after the Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, and Tinian Department of Public Services rescuers searched 15 hours this past weekend for a 70-year-old swimmer who had been reported missing by friends.

The Coast Guard said the swimmer had decided to swim across the Saipan-Tinian Channel without filing a float plan, any support crew, or any reasonable precautions, "and then kept swimming even after rescuers arrived."

[Editor's Note: The swimmer was Jim Bell, who was replicating a feat he had achieved to swim the Saipan-Tinian channel.]

The search and rescue response cost approximately $25,000, according to the Coast Guard, and kept units busy and potentially unable to respond quickly to genuine emergencies.

"This was beyond irresponsible and inconsiderate, this was reckless and negligent," said Coast Guard Capt. Thomas Sparks, of the swimmer's lack of preparedness. "This was an exorbitant and totally unnecessary expenditure of taxpayers' hard-earned money."

Sparks is the Coast Guard's senior officer in Guam and Commander of Sector Guam.

He said friends of the swimmer became concerned and notified the Coast Guard's 24-hour command center at Apra Harbor. The Coast Guard planned a search, which included an eight-person crew from Naval Helicopter Combat Squadron Two Five and personnel from Tinian DPS.

The Coast Guard is reminding mariners of obvious dangers and considerations associated with swimming the Saipan-Tinian channel or any major shipping lane without taking proper precautions.

"Swimmers are at risk from commercial and recreational traffic, fatigue and dehydration. Also, rescuers may be placed in harm's way for situations that could have been avoided. The Coast Guard strongly recommends open-ocean swimmers file a plan with friends and use appropriate support crew, including an escort vessel," the Coast Guard said. ***(USCG)***

LOST DOG

Angelo O'Connor Villagomez's dog, Oreo, has escaped. He was last seen in the China Town/Garapan area Tuesday night at 6pm. Help Villagomez find his dog! Please call Angelo at 285-6462 if you find him or see him. Oreo is a small white dog with some black fur. He answers to "Oreo" and is wearing a brown leather collar with silver metal studs.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SSHS PTA meeting set

To all parents/legal guardian of Saipan Southern High School: There will be a PTA meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 15, at 6pm in the cafeteria. ***(PR)***

Chacha Open House today

The Chacha Ocean View Jr. High School will be having an Open House today, Oct. 9, from 4pm to 6pm to distribute 1st quarter student mid-progress reports. Should you have any question and / or comments, call 237-3921 or 664-4100. This day will be a full day for students. ***(PR)***

MHS calendar of events

Oct. 9 Mid-Progress Report Open House, 4pm-6pm, Marianas High School campus. Parents, pick up your child's mid-progress report from your child's homeroom teacher. Students will be released at 1pm

Oct. 13 No classes (Commonwealth Cultural Day)

Oct. 14 MHS Community Council Meeting (PTA), 5:30pm at MHS cafeteria.

The MHS Class of 2008 yearbook is in. You can pick up your copy from the MHS main office, Monday-Friday, 3:30pm-5pm.

For questions and concerns contact 237-3206. ***(PR)***

Men's Walk and Candlelight Vigil set

The Family Violence Task Force and its community partners are inviting all men and their family members to join the "Halloween Men's Walk" and "Candlelight Vigil."

The event will be held Oct. 31, Friday, 5:30pm, starting at the Garapan Fishing Base. Participants are urged to be at the site by 5pm. There will be free t-shirts to the first 100 marchers.

For more information, contact the Ayuda Network (322-7469); or Lugat Pas (662-4583). ***(PR)***

OES PTA meeting

The PTSA officers of the Oleai Elementary School would like to inform the parents and guardians of its students that there will be a PTSA meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 14, 2008, 6:15pm, in the school cafeteria. ***(PR)***

Hopwood PTSA meeting today

Hopwood Junior High School is informing all parents and legal guardians of its students about the 2nd PTSA meeting to be held today, Oct. 9, from 6pm to 7pm, in the school cafeteria. Agenda will cover the election of new officers, meeting teachers, plus others. ***(PR)***

KagES PTA meeting today

Parents and teachers of Kagman Elementary School students are being informed that the school will be having a PTA meeting today, Oct. 9, 2008. "Please come and attend this meeting because important matters will be discussed," the school said in a statement. ***(PR)***

Wife runs away after husband allegedly bit her

A woman ran away from her house after her husband allegedly bit her and hit her with a cooking pan during a domestic dispute.

Police said the victim sustained bite marks on the leg and forearm, and bruises on the thigh.

Jin Min Wang, 35, was arrested Sunday night for assault and battery. He was taken to the Superior Court yesterday for a bail hearing.

Detective Andrea C. Ozawa stated in her report that on Sunday night, Wang called the Department of Public Safety to report that his wife had taken her belongings and left their home. He asked police to call him if his wife is found.

After more than an hour, a caller contacted DPS to report a beating case in San Antonio.

Police investigation showed that the victim actually ran away from Wang and stayed with a friend for four days.

The victim told police that during a domestic dispute, Wang bit her leg and hit her thigh with a cooking pan.

The victim said she was scared to report the beating to the police for fear that Wang would kill her. The person to whom she confided the beating immediately reported the matter to the police. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

House to DHS: Save investor visas

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
stefan_sebastian@saipantribune.com
BUSINESS EDITOR

In a unanimous vote Tuesday, CNMI House lawmakers passed a resolution calling on the Department of Homeland Security to let the CNMI maintain a visa program tailored around the needs of foreign investors as federal authorities craft regulations for their takeover of local immigration rules.

Investor visas have become a critical issue in the CNMI after President Bush earlier this year signed into law legislation that establishes federal authority over the CNMI's visa programs. Currently, the CNMI administers its own visa program, which gives foreign investors special consideration as a way to bolster the local economy.

The resolution, now bound for a vote in the Senate, urges DHS to maintain this program for as long as possible, or at least during the transitional period as the federal takeover begins. Its leading sponsor, House Floor Leader Joseph N. Camacho, said in an interview this is critical to helping investors adapt to any new federal requirements.

"What we're asking right now is that DHS would maintain our number of foreign investors for the period of the transition," he said, adding that investors need "breathing room" to work on how they will adjust to any new changes and work with business and government leaders on the issue.

"It's very important to the economy here in the CNMI that we listen to our foreign investors," he added. "The abrupt change, it's going to hurt a lot of investors and they need some breathing room to figure out how to accommodate it and the investors in general."

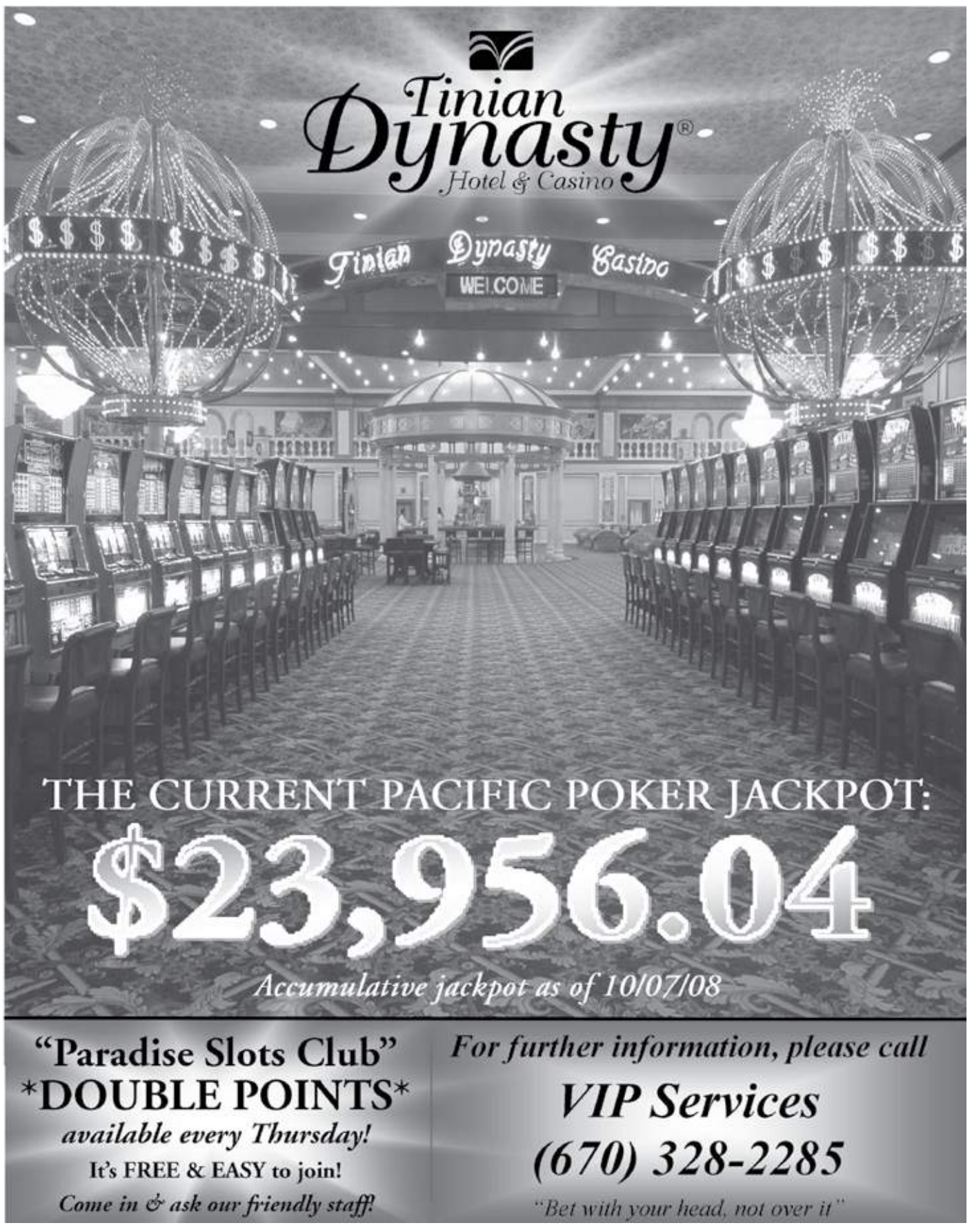
DHS is now crafting regulations based on the recently signed legislation, which are due for release sometime later this year.

Crime of The Week

Burglary incident

Crime Stoppers is seeking the community's assistance for information on any of the person(s) responsible for the theft of copper wires, aluminum louver window frames, and two power meter hubs from two buildings (Bldgs. D and E) owned by the Sablan Construction Company. The buildings are located behind the former Rifu Garment barracks in San Antonio. The incident was reported to the police on Sept. 23, 2008, at 9:52am. According to an employee of Sablan Construction Company, the said area was last secured on Saturday, Sept. 20, 2008, at 1:30pm.

Anyone having information about these crimes, please call the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. Crime Stoppers pays cash rewards up to $1,000 for information leading to an arrest. Caller ID is not used. All calls remain anonymous. ***(NMI Crime Stoppers)***



Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

October 09, 2000

On WASC accreditation, NMC urged to implement changes

The Northern Marianas College has been advised to integrate its strategic planning and implementation processes with its resource allocation and distribution to improve its institutional records and establish transparency that will allow open-communication with the whole college community. This was the primary recommendation offered by the seven-member team from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, who recently concluded a four-day accreditation of CNMI's lone postsecondary institution.

CPA tackles Navy's seaport concerns

Citing its significant contributions to the revival of the CNMI's economy, the Commonwealth Ports Authority is intensifying efforts to improve facilities and services provided to visiting vessels by the United States Navy at the Saipan International Harbor. Board Chair Roman S. Palacios disclosed a delegation of CPA officials recently met with U.S. Navy officials in Guam where issues surrounding the vessels' needs and problems upon docking at the Saipan seaport were discussed.

Tax credit in exchange for hiring persons with disability OK'd

The House of Representatives has finally passed legislation providing tax credits to employers who hire persons with disabilities after initial deliberation on the floor courted opposition from some members. HB 12-17, authored by Rep. Jesus T. Attao, will deduct up to $10,000 from the business gross receipt tax paid by companies for each person with disabilities they employ.

October 09, 2001

CNMI placed on highest alert

The CNMI was placed on the highest level of alert as the United States and its allies yesterday attacked Afghanistan's Taliban, which reportedly coddles terrorist leader Osama bin Laden. Department of Public Safety Commissioner Charles Ingram Jr. said that his command will implement the unofficial recommendation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to be at top-level alert, although he said that police operations will be modified.

US-Vietnam trade pact may impair NMI's competitiveness

Even as the demand for Saipan-made garments continue to fall due to a slowdown in the US economy, another shadow looms in the horizon-the expected resurgence of Vietnam as a major supplier of US retailers. Vietnam is predicted to emerge as a major new supplier of goods, including garments, after the US Senate voted to normalize trade relations with Hanoi, a precondition for applying the bilateral trade agreement concluded in July 2000 by the US and Vietnam.

Task Force seeks private sector empowerment

With America now officially at war, Rota Mayor Benjamin T. Manglona urged CNMI leaders to take decisive action at once to protect and revive the private sector, provide for a leaner but still efficient and effective government, and take steps to protect the public should events take a turn for the worst. Jumping the gun on the CNMI government, Manglona submitted the recommendations made by a task force he created on the emergency steps that can be taken to avert financial ruin and protect the public in the face of possible disruptions in transportation and shipping.

October 09, 2002

Debts strangle referral program

Members of the Group Health and Life Insurance Program are at risk of being turned away from on- and off-island medical providers because of unpaid medical referral claims amounting to approximately $1.4 million. With about $600,000 in claims that are already 90 days overdue, Group Health's third-party administrator, Hawaii Pacific Medical Referral, has warned it would suspend its contract with the Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund by October 15 unless Group Health coughs up $600,000 just so it could keep the doors of medical providers open for CNMI patients.

CDA inks agreement with CUC

The Commonwealth Development Authority has signed a Memorandum of Agreement that aims to settle the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation's $104 million accumulated debt with the government's lending arm. "The CDA has signed it. It [agreement] was forwarded to the CUC. We're waiting now for them to sanction the MOA," CDA Executive Director Mary-Lou Ada said in an interview yesterday.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

O.J.'s fate

For an arrogant thug of limited intelligence, O.J. Simpson has given us much to think about over the years. This past weekend, his first in custody in awhile, presented yet another opportunity.

The two most serious crimes for which he's stood trial were very different. One was a stick-up in a Las Vegas hotel room, an armed faceoff over sports memorabilia. The other left a young man and woman in a pool of their own blood outside a quiet condominium in Brentwood. And yet across those events, one a farce, the other a tragedy, Simpson has forced us to consider such matters as the role of race and celebrity in American justice. He has offered case studies in how money tweaks justice, and provided a template for questioning the implications of police abuse -- the Los Angeles Police Department's long history of mistreating black suspects made it impossible to dismiss out of hand those allegations in the murder case 13 years ago. Now, Simpson's conviction confronts us with another idea: In the law, can two wrongs make a right?

His guilt in the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman has, of course, never been established, though a civil jury did find him responsible for their wrongful deaths. And in the hotel room episode, an all-white panel concluded that he was, in fact, guilty of a host of offenses. But it's hard not to wonder whether the first jury wasn't distracted by the reputation of a football star who dazzled fans and an actor who cheerfully bored audiences. It's equally imaginable that this jury saw its chance to make amends for the last one.

Before returning Simpson to the recesses of our memories, it is worth remembering one poignant detail of that murder in Brentwood on a June night in 1994. Whoever killed Nicole Simpson left her two children -- O.J. Simpson's children -- alone in that condominium. They slept inside while their mother's throat was slashed on the front step of their home. The killer left them to discover her mutilated body. There is no forgiveness for those acts, which surely would sear the soul of any father. After he was acquitted of murder, Simpson did what any father would: He pledged to devote his life to finding the killer responsible for taking his children's mother from them. Instead, he has spent inordinate time over the last decade searching amid the nation's golf courses and resorts.

Today, Simpson is in jail, awaiting sentencing on convictions that could keep him in prison for the rest of his life. Whatever his guilt, whatever the jury's motives, we can rest assured of this: It couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

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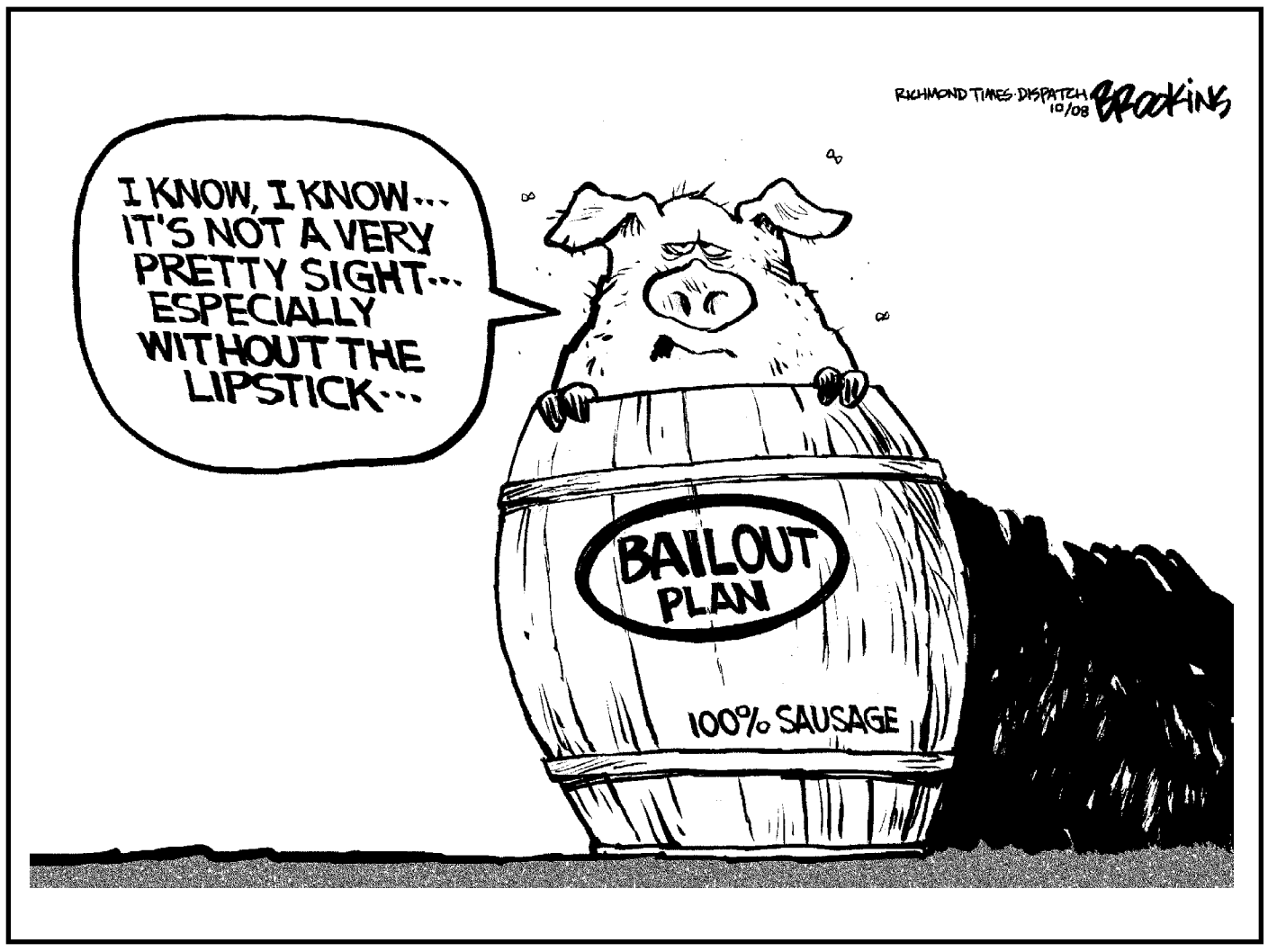
RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH 10/08 BROOKINS
I KNOW, I KNOW... IT'S NOT A VERY PRETTY SIGHT... ESPECIALLY WITHOUT THE LIPSTICK...
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Celebrating life

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is a partner with BizResults, LLC (www.bizresults.org). They can be contacted at biz_results@yahoo.com.

Alicia's golden locks of curly hair bounced as she ran to Jim Bell to give him a farewell hug before he headed into the waters at Obyan beach. At 70-years-old, Jim was the closest person to being her grandfather, since she's never met her real grandfather on either side.

Jim was wearing a bright orange shirt that he'd purchased for the swim, and he threaded his belt through the laces of his shoes so they would ride piggyback with him across the channel. The shoes would be put on when it came time to cross the hazardous reef at Tinian and climb on the rocks. This was Jim's third time to swim the channel, and his nonchalant manner prior to the swim belied the dangers he would face in the open ocean.

We watched Jim for 15 minutes while Alicia and her younger brother, Jason, played on the beach. His objective was to head to the east side of Tinian, in hopes that the current would carry him west through the channel toward the northeast side of the island. Nazario Borja had given Jim a tour of some of the possible landing sites earlier this week, and he would be waiting for Jim on Tinian to welcome him and give him a ride to Jim's apartment.

After nine hours and all the possible locations were checked, Nazario called with the news that Jim was nowhere to be found. It was finally decided that additional assistance was needed, so Nazario made the call to authorities on Tinian. In the ensuing hours we would talk to DPS and the Coast Guard to provide what details we could offer.

We started a fast and prayed for his safety, knowing that in the darkness he would have greater trouble. It was difficult sleeping that night so we started writing this article, not knowing if it would be an accolade or a eulogy to his life of adventure. It was a restless night wondering if Jim ran into jellyfish, was attacked by a tiger shark, or just succumbed to the siren song of the ocean.

At 6:40, on Sunday morning, we woke up still wondering about the fate of our friend. Another call to the Coast Guard didn't alleviate our concerns. After a helicopter search last night, another one was being dispatched along with a ship. Tinian Search and Rescue forces were also out scouring the waters in a massive search and rescue to find any sign of him.

At about 7:30 we called family in Colorado to let them know about Jim's situation. We agreed that if anyone could survive, it was Jim; but after 22 hours in the water, hope was dwindling.

One person we talked to about Jim's status commented that Jim had a "death wish," but he could not have been further from the truth. Jim is one of those rare individuals who truly embraces life. Jim was participating in an extreme sport that only a few would even consider. Channel swimmers, mountain climbers, racecar drivers, and escape artists don't obsess about death, but rather celebrate life with each new adventure. They have a purpose that compels them to do what ordinary mortals scoff or ridicule because of the inherent dangers.

It would take another two hours before James H. Bell would get his land legs to wade ashore near the blowholes on Tinian. It was quite an ordeal, but he has survived to now begin his next adventure to swim completely around Tinian.

We quoted Benjamin Elijah Mays a few weeks ago when he said: "The tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach. It isn't a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream."

The treacherous Tinian channel would have to wait another day to claim Jim Bell. Almost 24 hours after he began his swim, we received a welcome call that Jim had been spotted about two miles north of Tinian and was still swimming toward the shore with an escort following him. Knowing Jim, he probably didn't like having the escort because it wasn't his style to have an easy lifeline in case of trouble.

It would take another two hours before James H. Bell would get his land legs to wade ashore near the blowholes on Tinian. It was quite an ordeal, but he has survived to now begin his next adventure to swim completely around Tinian.

Many will miss seeing Jim as a familiar figure walking with his quick step all around Saipan. We'll miss his sense of humor and his cheery disposition. But, most of all we're going to miss celebrating life with Jim each time he risked his life to accomplish one of his adventures. He is one of those rare individuals who has a "life wish" and has helped each of us to realize what a joy it is to be alive. We'll miss you, Jim, but we know that life will be exciting wherever you call home.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Home escape planning and practice

By SANTIAGO F. TUDELA
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

If a fire broke out in your home, do you know how much time you would have to get out? Unfortunately, no one knows for sure. According to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association, more than one out of every four American households who made an estimate thought they would have at least six minutes before a fire in their home would become life-threatening. The time available is often less.

While most people feel safe in their homes, the reality is that home fires are much more common than people might think. There were nearly 400,000 home fires reported in 2006 in the United States, resulting in more than 2,500 civilian deaths and 12,500 civilian injuries. Home fires caused 80 percent of civilian deaths and 76 percent of injuries.In a perfect world, we would be able to prevent all home fires. In reality, we can be vigilant, but there are no guarantees. Any emergency can affect one's ability to think clearly, but during a fire, smoke and other physical factors can literally inhibit your ability to react. Preparing for the unexpected is difficult. But when it comes to home fires, minutes, even seconds, can mean the difference between life and death. That's why having well-practiced fire escape plan is vital to your families safety.

Here are the basics of home fire escape planning to get you and your family started:

■ Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home and have one inside each bedroom and outside of each sleeping area. For the best protection, interconnect alarms so that when one sounds, they all sound.

■ Test smoke alarms at least once a month.

■ Develop a fire escape plan that identifies two ways out of each room and a family meeting place outside.

■ Make sure your plan allows for any specific needs in your household. If everyone knows what to do, everyone can get out quickly.

■ Practice using the plan, at least twice a year. If everyone knows that everyone else is ready to exit quickly, no one will lose precious time trying to help someone who doesn't need help.

■ Some children and adults may not wake up to the sound of the smoke alarm. They may need help waking up.

This October 5-11 is Fire Prevention Week. While this year's theme is "Prevent Home Fires," we want CNMI residents to be prepared. Currently, only a minute part of CNMI households have a well-practiced plan in place for escaping home fires. The Department of Public Safety Fire Division is encouraging local families to make a fire escape plan and practice it. Anyone needing assistance in formulating a "Home Escape Plan" can contact the DPS Fire Division at 664-9003/4.

Fire is unpredictable. But preparation in the form of a well-practiced escape plan—at least twice a year—can help keep you and your family safe, and potentially save lives.

Santiago Tudela is the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety.

Letters to the Editor

A vision for a self-sufficient CNMI

I would first like to address Mr. Ambrose Bennett's latest imposition on the public consciousness in the form of the editorial forum. I ordinarily don't comment on his efforts to convince us that without him the rest of us would have no direction. However, this time he had the temerity to imply that if one did not participate in his nonsense, then one was not a genuine candidate.

Let's be clear. If I am not elected because I don't participate in a newspaper page-filler exercise, then so be it. My positions on issues concerning the Commonwealth are aired each Thursday at the Multi-Purpose Center. Anyone who wants to seriously listen to or share substantive ideas about the future of the CNMI or who feels the need to vehemently disagree is welcome to come and participate.

The *Saipan Tribune* editors have also assured me that my comments, views and plans will be published, though I choose not to participate in your forum. To date, they have afforded me this privilege. Perhaps, you missed them in your efforts to ensure that you were adequately in print.

I also read Mr. Bob Emmett's comments regarding something he forced himself, with great pain, to watch a second time. Mr. Emmett is concerned that none of the candidates, except Pete Tenorio, have an idea of what the job of the delegate entails. I'd like to assure Mr. Emment that one of the other candidates knows what the job entails. That candidate would be me. You may not like my plan and that is OK, but it *is* a plan. Perhaps, if you actually go to one of the forums or if you should come to hear me speak, you would better be able to hear and understand what I have to say. I heartily agree with you that we who live here deserve better than what we have gotten for the last 20 or so years. Hence, that is my reason for running for the delegate seat.

I have promised nothing except hard work. I promise that it won't be business as usual for the Commonwealth when I am in Washington. No lies, no pie in the sky promises, no photo ops, no golf, no padding the pockets, just hard work to get the job done. I will:

(1) Introduce legislation for the transfer of the control of the exclusive economic zone and submerged lands surrounding the CNMI from the United States to the CNMI.

(2) Immediately introduce legislation to have an office of the Small Business Administration open in the CNMI.

(3) Immediately introduce legislation to have a Veterans Administration Medical Facility built in the CNMI.

(4) And, if it is still an issue, work to have green cards and/or passports granted to non-American individuals who have immediate relative status in the CNMI.

These are but the first steps in an effort to secure economic self-sufficiency for the Commonwealth.

Those who have kept up with the national news lately must now realize the need for the Commonwealth to be self-sufficient. When the Asian economy slipped, so did the Commonwealth's. Now, the United States economy is at risk. Bailout after bailout and now, Wall Street. Credit in the U.S. is out the window. When times get tough there, times get similarly tough here. The other candidates' answer to these issues is to beg for more handouts and somehow convince the Washington establishment that they should have nothing to say about what goes on here. News flash! It just doesn't work that way. We must start to stand on our own feet.

As Mr. Tony Pelligrino says, we must start to look down and harvest the gems at our feet This won't be easy and there will be other issues that we must address, but it is a start to a viable economic future for the Commonwealth. I will be happy to meet with anyone or any group to elaborate on my positions.

If you are inclined to hear more, please contact Jeanne Rayphand at 235-9115, 235-5123 or 287-9807 to arrange a time and date. Thank you for your time.

John H. Davis Jr.
Candidate for CNMI Delegate

Land as part of local culture

The reason we have "land alienation" law is to protect the indigenous culture and land practices from disappearing, which will surely cause massive social breakdown and will bring poverty to the local people. This is what our forefathers feared the most and is why they included this safeguard provision in their Covenant negotiations with the United States.

Now 33 years later, some of us local people want to repeal Article XII of our Constitution because we feel it is preventing us from getting rich quickly and is hampering our economy. We want to do whatever we want with our lands, regardless of the foresight our forefathers thought best for us.

Let me ask you these: Do we really want to forsake our unique culture and land customs where we had lived and sustained together for centuries as indigenous people in our small beautiful islands? Are we ready to leap into the great future not caring where we will end up as minority groups of people (Carolinian and Chamorro) among other great nations? Are we ready for outsiders to come in and buy up our lands and move us out of the islands to who-knows-where? Do you want to end up a beggar on your own island?

Land is very much a part of our culture that you cannot separate both from each other. Without land our culture will disintegrate and that will be the end of the local people taking control of their destiny.

A lot of local people end up broke after they leased out their land and frivolously spent the millions of dollars in rental payments they received from the leases. They will be broke or landless for a long time before their land can revert to them. Imagine if they had sold their land without investing their sudden income wisely—they would end up as renters, or worse, homeless forever.

With land we can build a small shack to shelter us when the need arises without the worry of being homeless. We can also prevent hunger by feeding off the land. We can always count on the "family land" being there to help us out in times of needs.

These have always been our traditions and the more reasons we need to hold on to Article 12 because the law makes more sense to our culture and customs than without it, as our forefathers contemplated.

Enrique K. Seman
Kagman, Saipan

Constitutional right to landownership

We disagree with former chief justice Jose DelaCruz's statement to repeal Article 12 due to discriminatory and local economy analogy. No investor or money in the world would equal our ancestral, cultural, and constitutional right to land ownership in our homeland. We, the Northern Mariana descent people, have a huge responsibility as parents to protect our lands for our children and their future generations.

It's a shame that local indigenous NMDs of this caliber would advocate such propaganda to repeal Article 12. It seems that this newly formed committee of local business leaders, including Sen. Maria Frica Pangelinan and Efrain Camacho, only represent their own self-interest and agenda; they must have excess amount of land to sell or give away or, most likely, they are in desperate financial need, while 4,000 NMDs are waiting in line for a piece of lot from our homestead division.

We must all remember that it was the business community that pushed our people to food stamp lines and into the backyards for many years. This we must change. We question the motives of these individuals.

Let it be known by all men that so long as Taotao Tano exists, we will oppose and challenge anyone who promotes the dismantling of our constitutional right to landownership as outlined in Article 12. We believe that the outside world, including some of our own local NMDs, are instilling negative propaganda and will harm future generations. This we must oppose and prevent. The business community must respect the local NMDs ancestral and cultural rights to landownership, including our constitutional laws and any other laws for that matter.

Gregorio Cruz Jr.
President, Taotao Tano CNMI Inc.

Monument will benefit education

I give my full support to the proposed Marianas Trench Marine National Monument. I believe that we have a great opportunity in front of us that can greatly benefit us economically and financially. There are many reasons why I support the idea of a proposed monument, but my number one reason is how much it can benefit education in all areas.

Our children and all the other generations to come can have a better knowledge of the Marianas Trench in an educational perspective rather than a political perspective. There is so much to gain from this and many things yet to be discovered. By having a monument, we can open doors, not only for our poor economy, but for many students who may have an interest in marine studies or plan to pursue a career in marine studies.

The phrase "federal takeover" has been heard all over. Our island is suffering through many crises, but many times have been given help by the federal government. They have helped us with education, health programs, and more.

Those who are against the idea of the Mariana Trench Monument complain about not being able to access the ocean waters to fish and that the federal government is trying to run our islands. For one thing, not many people have traveled or fished out at the Northern Islands for years and with the high fuel prices, who would spend hundreds of dollars worth of fuel to go out to the Northern Islands? Not much.

If the Mariana Trench Monument will not benefit our poor economy, then what will? We've been given so much help by the federal government for many of years. They play a great part in the success in our education and other programs on our islands that are important to us. The government has greatly benefited from federal funds. We need help to solve our economic crisis and the federal government is our helping hand. So, before you make your decision, whether or not to support the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument, find out for yourself the facts and the benefits that will move our economy toward success and not just follow someone else's opinion.

Emelaine Fejeran
Kagman, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds around 10 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds around 10 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲98° ▼76°	▲88° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°

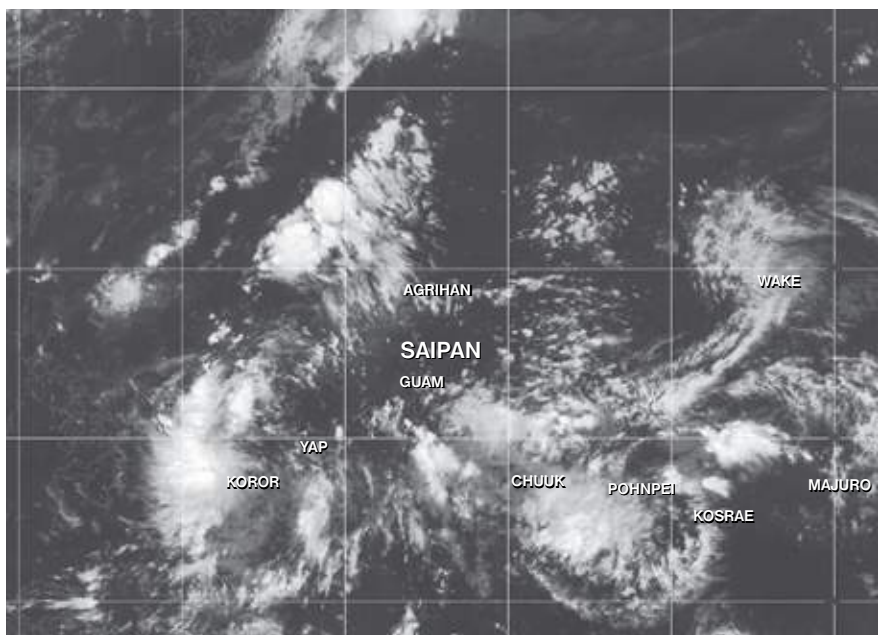
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲86	▼76
Palau	Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Yap	Cloudy	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼77
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼70
Kosrae	Cloudy	▲88	▼77
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼73

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲58	▼47
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	▲70	▼48
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	▲84	▼79
Honolulu	Showers	▲83	▼74
London	Partly Sunny	▲64	▼48
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲80	▼60
Manila	Thundershowers	▲81	▼72
Melbourne	Cloudy	▲66	▼53
Miami	Thundershowers	▲87	▼77
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲69	▼56
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲74	▼58
Paris	Cloudy	▲63	▼47
Pusan	Cloudy	▲75	▼65
Rome	Cloudy	▲76	▼55
Salem	Showers	▲55	▼40
San Francisco	Sunny	▲70	▼52
Seoul	Cloudy	▲73	▼56
Tokyo	Rain	▲73	▼71
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲71	▼60

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2008
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Weak low-level circulation is centered near 9N136E with a surface trough extending eastward to 5N148E to 5N156E. Convergent winds are producing scattered showers and thunderstorms in the vicinity of Palau between 02N and 13N from 130E to 135E and scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms within 150 miles of a line from 11N147E to 4N156E. Low-level convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms northwest of Kwajalein within 100 miles of a line from 10N162E to 10N167E. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms east of Majuro within 150 miles of a line from 8N172E eastward beyond 9N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
1:14AM Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
9:06AM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
4:40PM Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
10:23PM Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:08AM	6:01 PM
Friday	6:08AM	6:00 PM
Saturday	6:08AM	5:59 PM
Sunday	6:08AM	5:59 PM
Monday	6:08AM	5:58 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:02PM	12:49AM
Friday	2:43PM	1:41AM
Saturday	3:22PM	2:33AM
Sunday	4:00PM	3:25AM
Monday	4:39PM	4:18AM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota

CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	4:00am	4:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 099	5:00am	7:30am	Daily
NW 078	8:55am	2:00pm	Daily
NW 075	4:55pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:20pm	6:55pm	Daily

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:55am	11:35am	Daily

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:50am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	3:50am	7:20am	1,5

Saipan-Shanghai

FM 844	3:15am	5:55am	2,6

Rota-Guam

CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7

Guam-Manila

CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	7:00pm	8:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:15am	2:50pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:30am+1	Daily
NW 100	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	9:00pm	1:30am+1	Daily

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	4,7

Shanghai-Saipan

FM 843	7:50pm	2:15am+1	1,5

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6

Manila-Guam

CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	10:55pm	4:30am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:20pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

The CNMI community is invited to participate in the

SAPTEMBER & RECOVERY AWARENESS MONTH

'Family Fun Fair'

Saturday, October 11th, 2008

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. • Civic Center

Join this awareness celebration with entertainment, exhibits, face painting, cookie decorating, and a jump rope competition. The first 100 registrants for this event will receive a free t-shirt. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m.

The Family Fun Fair was originally scheduled for September 27th and we extend our sincere apologies for any inconvenience to our partner agencies who reported to Civic Center then.

Biba SAPTember & RECOVERY Awareness Month,
for a healthier, drug-free, & BRABU CNMI!

For more information, please contact: Mr. Derik Reyes: 233-4646

T.A.Y.A.

Take Action Youth Advocacy

Calling all youth from grade 9—12!

Are you interested making a difference on your island?
Here's a chance for you to become involved in a new Youth Advocacy where you will learn about drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and other youth related-issues.
You will be trained in leadership, armed with information to reach your peers and your community.
Opportunities to express yourself through dance, media, and design.

CONTACT THE COMMUNITY GUIDANCE CENTER OR YOU CAN ALSO SIGN UP AT THE FAMILY FAIR ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11TH, 2008 FROM 10:00AM-3:00PM AT THE CIVIC CENTER BASKETBALL COURT IN SUSUPE.

Look for the BRABU banner.

For more information please call Becky Covarrubias

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS

DPH-COMMUNITY GUIDANCE CENTER
Tel: (670) 323-6560/61

Island Snapshots

NMC OFFERS SROTC CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cadets from the Northern Marianas College's Senior Reserve Officer Training Corps pose with NMC officials and visiting representatives from the University of Guam's SROTC program. They had met earlier to discuss various military and educational opportunities. Standing from left: CDI program manager Dave Apatang, cadets Jose Manibusan, Donovan Castro, and Kennedy Benjamin; Col. Paul J. Woods, SGM Patrick W. Durr, NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, cadet Ivan Mereb, LTC Kevin Wesowloski, Capt. Sarah Osborne, and COMPASS dean Tee Abraham. Seated from left are cadets Jeffrey Repeki, Alexandria Davis, Emil Romolor, and Tania David. For more information about the NMC-SROTC Program, contact Ray Diaz at 234-5498 ext. 1030 or e-mail raymondd@nmcnet.edu.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday Vonnie Santos, right, shown here with friends.

ROTARY GUEST KRISTI EATON

Assistant Attorney General Alan Barack, speaking to members of the Rotary Club of Saipan Tuesday, detailed a draft summary of regulations he has been working on for the Commonwealth utilities Corp. on net metering and renewable energy sources. These regulations will allow customers to produce and sell renewable energy to CUC. Renewable energy sources include wind turbines, ocean current turbines, solar energy and hydropower.

FIRST PLACE CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Congratulations to Kristina Jane on placing first place at the Primary Grade Forensic Competition in Dramatic Interpretation.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday greetings go out to Justin Roque, who is celebrating his fourth birthday today, Oct. 9. Greetings come from your mom and dad.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated happy birthday to Zasha Aldan.

MEDIA FRENZY FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Members of the Japanese media aim their cameras at the Department of Corrections where attorney Bruce Berline was holding a meeting with his client, Kazuyoshi Miura, Tuesday afternoon.

Business

AIG execs' retreat after bailout angers lawmakers

WASHINGTON (AP)—Days after it got a federal bailout, American International Group Inc. spent $440,000 on a posh California retreat for its executives, complete with spa treatments, banquets and golf outings, according to lawmakers investigating the company's meltdown.

AIG sent its executives to the coastal St. Regis resort south of Los Angeles even as the company tapped into an $85 billion loan from the government it needed to stave off bankruptcy. The resort tab included $23,380 worth of spa treatments for AIG employees, according to invoices the resort turned over to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

The retreat didn't include anyone from the financial products division that nearly drove AIG under, but lawmakers still were enraged over thousands of dollars spent on outing for executives of AIG's main U.S. life insurance subsidiary.

"Average Americans are suffering economically. They're losing their jobs, their homes and their health insurance," the committee's chairman, Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., scolded the company during a lengthy opening statement at a hearing Tuesday. "Yet less than one week after the taxpayers rescued AIG, company executives could be found wining and dining at one of the most exclusive resorts in the nation."

Willumstad

Former AIG CEO Robert Willumstad, who lost his job a day after the Federal Reserve put up the $85 billion on Sept. 16, said he was not familiar with the conference and would not have gone along with it.

"It seems very inappropriate," Willumstad said in response to questioning from Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md.

Sullivan

"Those executives should be fired," Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama said at a debate with Sen. John McCain on Tuesday, referring to the retreat participants. Obama also said AIG should give the Treasury $440,000 to cover the costs of the retreat.

But Eric Dinallo, superintendent of the New York State Insurance Department, said he could see the value of such a retreat under the circumstances.

"Having been at large global companies and knowing what condition AIG was in ... the absolute worst thing that could have happened" would have been for employees and underwriters in its life insurance subsidiary to flee the company.

"I do agree there is some profligate spending there, but the concept of bringing all the major employees together ... to ensure that the $85 billion could be as greatly as possible paid back would have been not a crazy corporate decision," Dinallo told the House committee.

The hearing disclosed that AIG executives hid the full range of its risky financial products from auditors as losses mounted, according to documents released by the committee, which is examining the chain of events that forced the government to bail out the conglomerate.

Oil dips to $89 on slump fears

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices fell to $89 a barrel Wednesday in Asia on investor concerns that the credit crisis that began in the U.S. will trigger a prolonged global economic slowdown and hurt crude demand.

Light, sweet crude for November delivery was down 94 cents to $89.13 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange by midday in Singapore. The contract overnight rose $2.25 to settle at $90.06.

A $700 billion U.S. financial bailout plan approved last Friday has failed to soothe investors worried about a deepening economic malaise. The Dow Jones industrial average fell more than 500 points Tuesday to a five-year low.

The crisis has spread to Europe as well. On Monday, Germany announced a bailout package Sunday totaling $69 billion for Hypo Real Estate, the country's second-biggest commercial property lender. Ireland, Iceland, Denmark and Greece moved quickly to guarantee bank deposits to ease consumer anxiety.

"We've got major issues in every corner of the planet," said Peter McGuire, managing director at investment firm Commodity Warrants Australia in Sydney. "The world economy is like a house that's been ravaged by termites."

Investors are watching for signs of slowing U.S. demand in the weekly oil inventories report to be released later Wednesday from the U.S. Energy Department's Energy Information Administration. The petroleum supply report was expected to show that oil stocks fell 1 million barrels, according to the average of analysts' estimates in a survey by energy information provider Platts.

Asian stocks plunge on unabated credit market

TOKYO (AP)—Asian stock markets tumbled Wednesday, with Japan's Nikkei index sinking nearly 10 percent, as recent steps by the world's major economies to fortify credit markets failed to stem fears that the spreading financial crisis could spawn a global recession.

After a miserable day on Wall Street when the Dow Jones industrials lost more than 500 points, investors in Asia responded by dumping stocks in a broad regional sell-off.

Japanese shares were hammered hard, with the benchmark Nikkei 225 stock average spiraling down nearly 10 percent to 9,159 in afternoon trading to its lowest intraday level in five years.

Shares of Toyota Motor Corp. sank 12 percent on reports that its operating profit would fall 20 percent in the fiscal year through March.

"Selling seems almost unstoppable because of uncertainty over the crisis," said Kazuki Miyazawa, market analyst at Daiwa Securities SMBC Co. Ltd. in Tokyo. "Investors simply don't find incentives to buy stocks."

The carnage was also brutal in Hong Kong, where the blue chip Hang Seng index plunged 5.6 percent to 15,871.

To ease the credit crunch, Hong Kong's de factor central bank said it will cut the benchmark interest rate by 1 percentage point to 2.5 percent. The move represents a break from Hong Kong's traditional pattern of following the U.S. Federal Funds target rate, which is now at 2 percent. The authority said it has changed its formula to calculate its base rate from 150 basis points above the prevailing U.S. fed funds rate to 50 basis points.

Australia's benchmark S&P/ASX200 shed 5 percent, wiping out a 1.7 percent gain on Tuesday after the country's central bank cut its key interest rate by a larger-than-expected 1 percentage point.

Asian markets were deep in the red: South Korea's benchmark index was down 6.1 percent, Thailand's market was down 6 percent, and Indonesia's stock market halted trading when its key index plunged 10 percent.

Fed, in emergency move, will lend to companies

WASHINGTON (AP)—Frantically trying to stop the bleeding on Wall Street, the Federal Reserve took a first-time step Tuesday to get cash directly to businesses and hinted that interest rates could come down soon. Stocks continued their free fall anyway and hit new five-year lows.

The central bank invoked emergency powers to lend money to companies outside the financial sector and buy up mounds of commercial paper, the short-term debt that firms use to pay for everyday expenses like salaries and supplies.

The Fed, which has only loaned money to banks before, made the move as the gravest financial crisis in decades wore on and concern spread around the world.

In a speech to the National Association for Business Economics, Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke delivered a strong signal interest rates may need to be cut. And he warned the country could be stuck in the economic doldrums for some time.

"The outlook for economic growth has worsened," Bernanke said. "The heightened financial turmoil that we have experienced of late may well lengthen the period of weak economic performance."

The gloomy assessment appeared to open the door wider to an interest rate cut on or before the Fed convenes again Oct. 28. The Fed's key interest rate now stands at 2 percent.

Wall Street turned its back. The Dow Jones industrials lost 508 points, more than 5 percent, to close at 9,447, the lowest since Sept. 30, 2003. The Standard & Poor's 500 closed below 1,000 for the first time since that same day.

The economic crisis was a major focus of a second presidential debate Tuesday night between Sens. John McCain and Barack Obama. During sharp exchanges with Obama, McCain called for a far-reaching program to stem foreclosures by requiring the federal government to renegotiate the mortgages of individual homeowners and make them more affordable.

Nation

McCain, Obama clash over economic crisis

By CHARLES BABINGTON
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Barack Obama and John McCain clashed repeatedly over the causes and cures for the worst economic crisis in 80 years Tuesday night in a debate in which Republican McCain called for sweeping action by the government to directly shield many homeowners from mortgage foreclosure.

"It's my proposal. It's not Sen. Obama's proposal, it's not President Bush's proposal," McCain said in the debate that he hoped could revive his fortunes in a presidential race trending toward his rival.

In one pointed confrontation on foreign policy, Obama bluntly challenged McCain's steadiness. "This is a guy who sang bomb, bomb, bomb Iran, who called for the annihilation of North Korea—that I don't think is an example of speaking softly."

That came after McCain accused him of foolishly threatening to invade Pakistan and said, "I'm not going to telegraph my punches, which is what Sen. Obama did."

The debate was the second of three between the two major party rivals, and the only one to feature a format in which voters seated a few feet away posed questions to the candidates.

They were polite, but the strain of the campaign showed. At one point, McCain referred to Obama as "that one," rather than speaking his name.

"It's good to be with you at a town hall meeting," McCain also jabbed at his rival, who has spurned the Republican's calls for numerous such joint appearances across the fall campaign.

They debated on a stage at Belmont University four weeks before Election Day in a race that has lately favored Obama, both in national polls and in surveys in pivotal battleground states.

Not surprisingly, many of the questions dealt with an economy in trouble.

Obama said the current crisis was the "final verdict on the failed economic policies of the last eight years" that President Bush pursued and were "supported by Sen. McCain."

He contended that Bush, McCain and others had favored deregulation of the financial industry, predicting that would "let markets run wild and prosperity would rain down on all of us. It didn't happen."

McCain's pledge to have the government help individual homeowners avoid foreclosure went beyond the details of the bailout that recently cleared Congress. The legislation allows but does not require Treasury to purchase mortgages directly. Obama has said previously that idea should be studied, and his campaign contended McCain's proposal was not a new one.

McCain's campaign issued a written statement that said the $300 billion cost of his initiative would be paid out of the $700 billion approved late last week.

"I would order the secretary of the Treasury to immediately buy up the bad home loan mortgages in America and renegotiate at the new value of those homes, at the diminished value of those homes, and let people be able to make those payments and stay in their homes," he said.

"Is it expensive? Yes. But we all know, my friends, until we stabilize home values in America, we're never going to start turning around and creating jobs and fixing our economy, and we've got to give some trust and confidence back to America."

McCain also said it was important to reform the giant benefit programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

"My friends, we are not going to be able to provide the same benefit for present-day workers that present-day retirees have today," he said, although he did not elaborate.

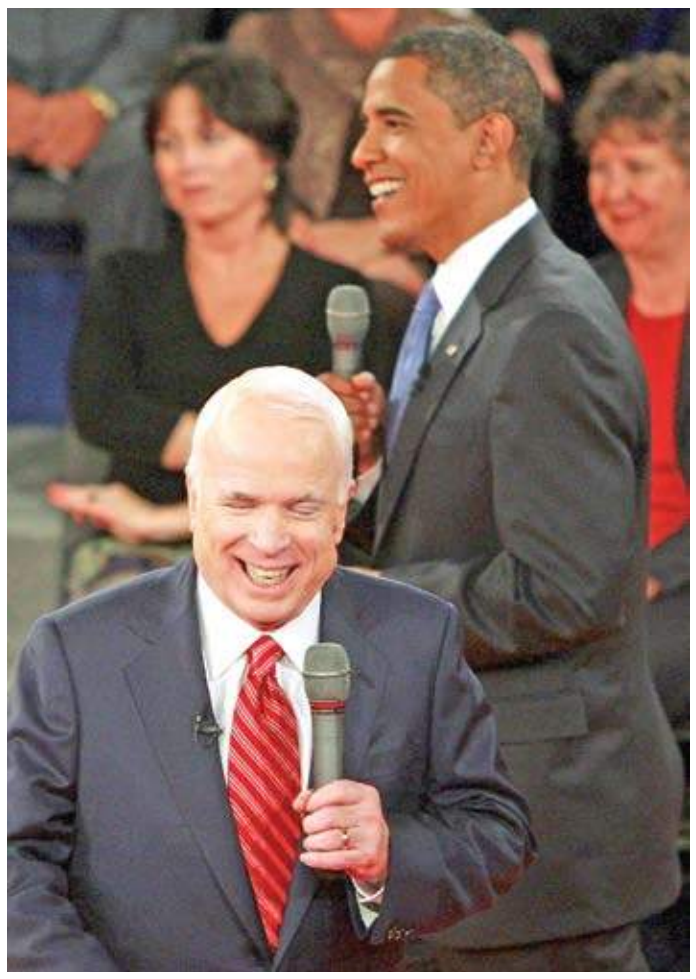
The two men also competed to demonstrate their qualifications as reformers at a time voters are clamoring for change.

McCain accused Obama of being the Senate's second-highest recipient of donations from individuals at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the two now-disgraced mortgage industry giants.

"There were some of us who stood up against it," McCain said of the lead-up to the financial crisis. "There were others who took a hike."

Obama shot back that McCain's campaign manager, Rick Davis, has a stake in a Washington lobbying firm that received thousands of dollars a month from Freddie Mac until recently.

Pivoting quickly to show his concern with members of the audience listening from a few feet away, he said, "You're not interested in politicians pointing fingers. What you're interested in is trying to figure out, how is this going to impact you."



AP

Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., laugh during a town hall-style presidential debate at Belmont University in Nashville, Tenn., Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2008.

Asia

China sets melamine levels for milk products

BEIJING (AP)—China on Wednesday announced standards for levels of the industrial chemical melamine permitted in milk and food products as it seeks to rein in a festering safety scare.

The government has been struggling to deal with the health and public relations issues stemming from the scandal, which erupted last month and is increasingly affecting China's food exports.

The crisis has been blamed on dairy suppliers who are accused of adding melamine to watered-down milk to fool quality control tests and make the product appear rich in protein.

Melamine, used in products including plastics, paint and adhesives, can lead to kidney stones and possibly life-threatening kidney failure. The deaths of at least four babies in China have been blamed on the chemical and more than 54,000 children have been sickened.

Wang Xuening, a Health Ministry official, on Wednesday acknowledged that small amounts of melamine can leech from packaging into milk and other foods, but it explicitly forbids deliberate tainting.

"For those who add melamine into food products, their legal responsibility will be investigated," said Wang, who is the deputy director of the ministry's health supervision bureau.

Safe melamine limits were set at 1 part per million of infant formula and 2.5 parts per million for liquid milk, milk powder and food products that contain more than 15 percent milk.

There had been no previous standards and levels of melamine discovered in batches of milk powder recently registered as much as 6,196 parts per million. Chinese health officials have said no harm comes from consuming less than 0.63 parts per million.

US-Taiwan-China relationship back in balance

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan's once-strained relations with the United States are back on track after the Bush administration approved a long-delayed $6.5 billion package of weapons to help the island defend itself against China.

Though China reacted angrily, the deal is also a sign that the sometimes shaky three-way relationship between China, Taiwan and the U.S. is moving back into balance.

China had profited from a rupture in U.S.-Taiwan military relations, but with the announcement of the deal, that rupture has now been repaired.

"The final decision of the U.S. executive branch reflected a prudent and rational decision," said Alexander Huang, a China policy expert at Tamkang University in Taipei. "It should be understood by Beijing and welcomed by Taipei."

The decision, announced late last week, is good news for Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou, who wants to maintain close ties with Washington while lessening tensions with the communist mainland, from which Taiwan split amid civil war in 1949.

Ma took power in May, after Taiwan's electorate decided it had had enough of the China-averse policies of former President Chen Shui-bian and his pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party.

Those policies threatened to upset the balance that has kept the peace over the 100-mile-wide Taiwan Strait since Washington shifted its recognition in 1979 from Taipei to Beijing as the legitimate government of China.

Chen incensed Beijing, which still views Taiwan as part of its territory and has threatened to attack if the island ever moves to make the break permanent.

He also angered Washington, Taiwan's most important foreign partner. While the U.S. is legally committed to help defend Taiwan, it also wants good relations with China, which purchases huge amounts of American debt and is an important partner in efforts to shut down North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Calm returns to Bangkok after deadly rioting

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Soldiers stood guard on street corners Wednesday as an uneasy calm returned to Bangkok after fierce clashes between anti-government protesters and police left at least two dead and more than 400 injured. Hundreds of workers swept the streets around Parliament littered with burned-out cars and debris from Tuesday's rioting, which degenerated into the worst political violence in more than 16 years. Troops armed with batons and helmets were stationed at the Bangkok police headquarters near Parliament. There was no sign of renewed street clashes Wednesday between police and protesters, mainly from urban areas, who want sweeping electoral changes to prevent what they say are corrupt politicians exploiting the rural majority to take power. Parliament was a scene of chaos on Tuesday. Anti-government protesters barricaded the building and trapped lawmakers inside for several hours as police outside fired countless volleys of tear gas trying to clear the area.

Plane crash in Nepal kills 17, official says

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP)—A private Yeti Airlines plane crashed Wednesday while landing in the Mt. Everest region during foggy weather in Nepal, killing 14 tourists from Germany and Switzerland and three other people, an airport official said. The plane took off from the capital, Katmandu, and hit a boundary fence while landing at Lukla airport, about 185 miles to the east, said Mohan Adhikari, general manager of the Katmandu airport. Adhikari said 18 people were on board. The crash killed 12 German and two Swiss tourists, as well as two Nepalese crew members, he said. The identity of one passenger killed in the crash was not immediately known. One Nepalese pilot survived the crash and was flown to Katmandu for medical treatment, Adhikari said.

US law against child soldiers applies to RP rebel groups, government militias

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Rebel groups and government-armed militias using child soldiers in the Philippines and 16 other strife-torn countries face prosecution in the United States under a new U.S. law, a human rights group said Wednesday. The New York-based Human Rights Watch said the Child Soldiers Accountability Act, signed by President George W. Bush on Oct. 3, makes it a federal crime in the United States to recruit and use soldiers under 15 years even if they operate outside the U.S. The penalty ranges up to 20 years, or life in prison if the child dies. Jo Becker, child rights advocate of Human Rights Watch, said commanders who recruit and use children in armed conflicts "can no longer come to the United States without the risk of ending up in jail." "This new law is a breakthrough because it no longer leaves the prosecution of child recruiters to international tribunals and the national courts of conflict-affected countries," Becker said in a statement.

World

Nobel physics prize goes to 2 Japanese, American

By MALCOLM RITTER
AP SCIENCE WRITER

Two Japanese scientists and an American won the 2008 Nobel Prize in physics on Tuesday for theoretical advances that help explain the behavior of the smallest particles of matter.

The American, Yoichiro Nambu, 87, of the University of Chicago, won half the $1.4 million prize for mathematical work he did nearly a half-century ago.

"I had almost given up" on getting the Nobel, Nambu said.

Makoto Kobayashi and Toshihide Maskawa of Japan shared the other half for a 1972 theory that forecast the later discovery of a new family of subatomic particles.

The insights of the three scientists "give us a deeper understanding of what happens far inside the tiniest building blocks of matter," said the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, which presents the physics award.

AP

Retired University of Chicago Physics professor Yoichiro Nambu responds to a question during a news conference after winning the Nobel Prize in Physics on the university campus in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago, Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2008.

Or, as physicist Phil Schewe, a spokesman for the American Institute of Physics, put it: "Nature works in strange ways, and these three physicists helped to explain that strangeness in an ingenious way."

They focused on a concept physicists call symmetry, and more specifically on occasions when that symmetry is violated.

In physics, the idea of symmetry means that a physical situation will be unaltered by certain changes. At the subatomic level, for example, things should happen the same way whether time is running forward or backward, so if you were watching a movie, you couldn't tell which way the movie was going. Similarly, symmetry could mean that you couldn't tell whether you were viewing action directly or through a mirror.

Iraq's FM: 'Bold' decisions needed on bases deal

BAGHDAD (AP)—The Iraqi foreign minister said Tuesday it will require "bold political decisions" to resolve the major issue standing in the way of a deal allowing American troops to remain here next year—who would try U.S. troops accused of crimes.

Neighboring Iran stepped up pressure against the proposed agreement, with President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad telling a visiting Iraqi official that Iraq had "a duty" to resist the Americans and another Iranian leader warning of unspecified consequences throughout the region.

American and Iraqi negotiators have been working for months to hammer out an agreement governing the operations of U.S. forces in this country after the current U.N. mandate expires at the end of the year.

Iraqi officials say the draft calls for U.S. troops to leave the country by the end of 2011 unless the Baghdad government asks them to stay.

But legal immunity for U.S. soldiers under Iraqi law has emerged as the major obstacle, with neither side able to find language to satisfy the other.

WORLD BRIEFS

Russia appears to begin final Georgia pullout

KARALETI, Georgia (AP)—Russian forces appear to have begun the final stage of a pullback from positions inside Georgia near the breakaway South Ossetia region. A main Russian checkpoint on a road leading to South Ossetia has been dismantled and bulldozers were razing the post early Wednesday. Russian troops were sweeping for mines and two bulldozers were leveling the site in Karaleti. Russia must pull out its troops from areas surrounding South Ossetia and Abkhazia by Friday under Western-backed agreements forged after its August war with Georgia. The head of Russian peacekeeping troops based in South Ossetia said Tuesday that the withdrawal would begin Wednesday and be completed within 24 hours.

Norbert strengthens into Category 2 hurricane

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Hurricane Norbert strengthened into a powerful Category 2 storm over the Pacific Ocean and forecasters warned that it could reach Mexico's Baja California peninsula by the weekend. The hurricane was expected to become a major Category 3 storm on Wednesday and then turn toward the northeast on Thursday on a path that could take it over the southern Baja peninsula and the Mexican mainland, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said. Forecasters said Norbert was moving west-northwest at 10 mph (17 kph) and by late Tuesday was located 500 miles (805 kilometers) south of Baja California's tip. It had sustained winds of near 105 mph (165 kph). Norbert is the seventh hurricane of the east Pacific season.

Half-ton Mexican man dies after pleading for help

JUAREZ, Mexico (AP)—A 450-kilogram (990-pound), bedridden man who had appealed on Mexican television for help tackling his weight problem died Tuesday of heart failure, his family said. Emergency officials had to knock down Jose Luis Garza's bedroom wall and put him in the back of a friend's pickup truck to take him to a hospital as he fought for his life. The 47-year-old was pronounced dead on arrival. Garza followed in the footsteps of the world's fattest man, fellow Mexican Manuel Uribe of Monterrey, by taking his weight problem public. Garza lived about an hour away from Uribe in the northern town of Juarez. Garza said he had always struggled with his weight but fell into a cycle of depression and overeating nine months ago after his parents died of natural causes within two weeks of each other. He had been bedridden for four months. Garza's condition deteriorated over the weekend as he struggled to breathe and eat. Family members criticized officials for not moving Garza to a hospital before he became critically ill. "If he had received support at the time he asked for it, he would still be with us," said his brother Pedro Garza. State officials argued there was little they could do.

Environment

Get in there with them

There is nothing quite like a first hand tour of a place to help you get to know it. Reading about a place and imagining what it looks like is a great introduction and a wonderful way to start, but to really know and learn to love a place it is best to go there yourself.

I am going to take you on an armchair tour of some beautiful places right here on Saipan. We'll go under the sea and see our amazing coral reefs. While I hope that you enjoy the tour and learn more about the places we'll be virtually visiting, I invite you to learn to scuba dive so you can go there and check it out for yourself. If you already know how to dive then you may have already seen some of these sights. If not, it is an easy and fun process to learn how to live temporarily in that fascinating 3 dimensional underwater world of the coral reef. Scuba diving is not a daring or dangerous sport but it does require some specific training by a professional instructor. There are lots of instructor choices here on Saipan, Tinian and Rota so I urge you to get that training and get yourself into the water and see first hand why we need to do all we can to preserve and use our Marianas coral reefs wisely.

Today we will visit a place you can go to by boat from either inside or outside the barrier reef that borders the lagoon on our western shore. Called Fa Liket in the Carolinian tongue, you may know it as "those big rocks" out on the reef you can see from Tanapag.

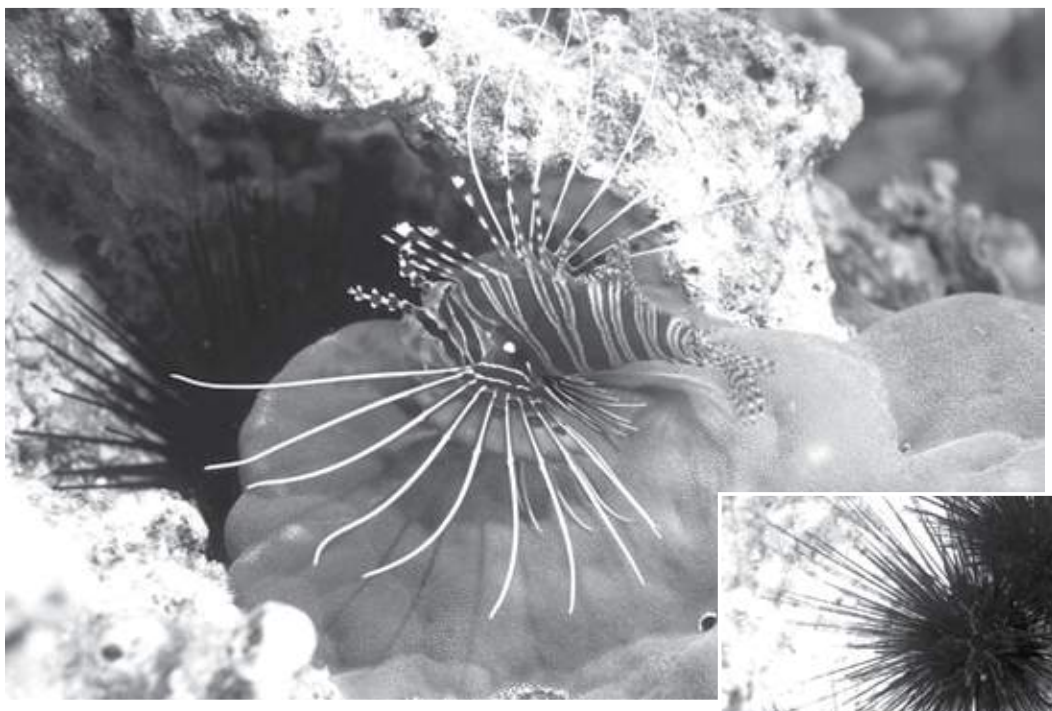
The waters on both sides of the reef there are fairly shallow and even on the outside the depth drops off gradually. Some places have a steep drop off to several hundred feet but not here at the beautiful underwater world of the Big Rocks. You can snorkel here if you have not yet learned to scuba dive. You will see how the fishes that abound here use the passageways around the rocks to protect themselves and to come and go between the inside world of the shallow, sandy bottomed lagoon and the open water of the Philippine Sea outside the reef. The Big Rocks form a sort of broken passage between the inside and the outside. Most of the barrier reef is 50 feet across or so at the outer rim but here the rocks themselves form a gateway.

It is said that the first Carolinian residents to come here from Satawal in the Western Carolines in 1815 stayed in their voyaging canoes out by these very rocks to give thanks and to balance their new arrival with the existing forces of nature before they came ashore and began to repopulate Saipan after a long period of no people living here.

This place deserves some of your time. You will be amazed at the many species of fish and other sea creatures you see here. Corals and crabs, lobsters and lionfish, nemo and narwhals (okay, no narwhals) and nudibranches, too. There are so many living things here that it will take many trips back to see even a small portion of them.

Spending time there lying on the bottom, not moving but just watching the marine world unfold before you, is an education in itself. Spending time there watching and learning drives home the point that it is important for us humans to do what we can to try and protect this reef. Use it, enjoy it, coexist with the reef and do it as little harm as possible. You owe it to yourself to go see this area. You will come away with a renewed sense of awe about how the natural world fits together and works like an interconnected whole. You will see firsthand how the coral reef acts both as a nursery and a grocery store for the creatures that live in the sea. You'll have fun in our crystal waters.

Written by Bruce Bateman for CoCo.



Lionfish in the forefront, grazing over porites coral.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

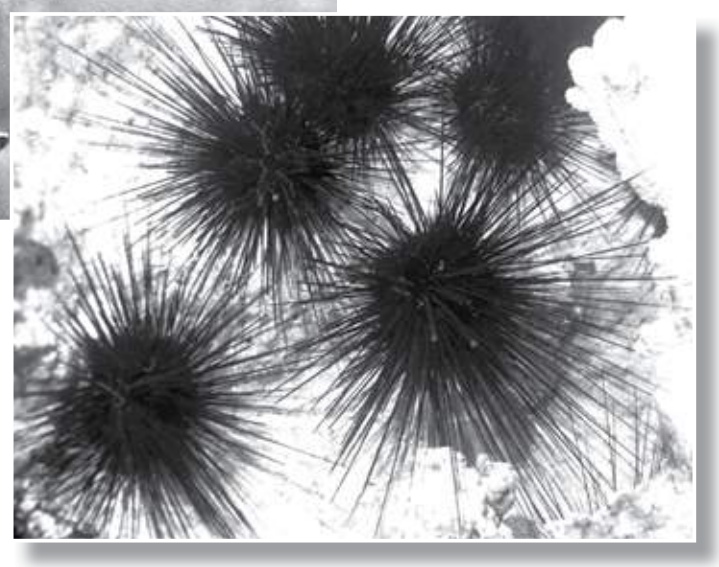


Image of a glazing sea urchin – they are common in the lagoon.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pufferfish swimming through Isopora, a branching coral.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'Take the Right Route' tomorrow!

"Take the "Right Route" Oct. 10 by walking, running, biking, or carpooling to work or school in order to reduce your carbon footprint.

Your carbon footprint is the direct effect that your actions and lifestyle have on the environment in terms of CO_2 emissions. Probably the biggest contributors to your personal "footprint" are your travel needs, and your electricity demands. These actions contribute to accelerating global warming and climate change.

Everyone has a responsibility to the world we live in now and the world we will leave to future generations. Take a first step to reduce your carbon footprint and "Take the Right Route" Oct 10th by walking, running, biking, or carpooling to work or school. You will save one pound of CO_2 for every mile you don't drive, save money, and maybe even your waistline.

Individuals, schools, and organizations that participate will receive a FREE pair of "Walk it, Don't Drive it" zories, water bottle or lanyard.

Interested? Please contact:

Laruen Sanchez or Noberto Mendiola at the CNMI Energy Office at 664-4480/1 or energy@pticom.com.

(CoCo)

Life & Style

After divorce, Bill Murray looks for renewal

By JAKE COYLE
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

AP
Actor Bill Murray is photographed at the Waldorf Astoria, Friday, Oct. 3, 2008, in New York, while in town to promote his new film "City of Ember."

The deadpan and depressed characters Bill Murray has specialized in portraying as an actor in recent years have always stood in contrast to the life-of-the-party guy he is in real life - whether on a golf course or shuttling people around downtown Stockholm in a golf cart, as he did last year.

But Murray said he identified anew with those characters - like the dour Herman Blume in "Rushmore" - when his wife of nearly 11 years filed for divorce in May. In the papers filed by Jennifer Butler Murray, she alleged that Murray abused her and was addicted to alcohol and marijuana.

"That was devastating," Murray said. "That was the worst thing that ever happened to me in my entire life."

Though the freshness of such a wound would keep many Hollywood stars far away from the press, Murray, 58, came to New York from his home upstate to help publicize "City of Ember," a film opening Friday in which he co-stars along with Saoirse Ronan, the young star of "Atonement," and Tim Robbins.

About a city forged underground because of environmental destruction on the earth's surface, it's a kind of somber, underworld "Jetsons" - and a clear metaphor to contemporary concerns. Murray plays the city's mayor, a lackadaisically corrupt but popular figure.

Though not as substantial as some of Murray's best roles - Bob Harris in "Lost in Translation," Don Johnston in "Broken Flowers," Phil Connors in "Groundhog Day" - it's still a typically lively, self-aware performance; you expect him to wink to the camera at any moment.

The film was shot in Belfast, Ireland, before the divorce, which was made final in June. The months after have been ones of depression for the comedian. The court decided that the couple's four children will live with their mother, while Murray has visitation rights and will pay child support.

In a forthright and emotional conversation, Murray rarely struck a tone of bitterness about the break-up, but rather spoke with watery eyes of a tremendously painful summer trying to reconcile himself to the divorce.

"I was just dead, just broken," he said.

"When you're really in love with someone and this happens - I never had anything like this happen," he said. "It's like your faith in people is destroyed because the person you trusted the most you can no longer trust at all. ... The person you know isn't there anymore."

Murray said his lowest point came a few weeks ago. When friends asked if he wanted to participate in an air show to support the Illinois United Service Organizations (Murray grew up outside Chicago), he accepted the skydiving invitation.

"They asked me on a day I didn't care," said Murray. "I didn't even care if there was a parachute. Of course, by the time I got there I had had a few good days and I thought, `What am I doing?'"

But Murray said he's begun building himself back up, and one of the first steps was coming out to discuss "City of Ember" - and even attend the premiere, "which is a nuisance," he said with characteristic deadpan.

"I've had a great deal of success in life - not just money or fame or anything like that - I just feel like I've done well in many areas of life," said Murray. "I've learned how to live and I think I've learned things about living. It's almost like: `OK, you learned that much, now let's try this. Let's see how you can do if this happens to you.'"

Murray is famously difficult to get in touch with for a film. He doesn't have an agent or a publicist and in the past, filmmakers have had to leave a message on a voice mail, which Murray checked infrequently. He has joked that entire careers have been launched on the parts he's turned down.

"City of Ember" director Gil Kenan ("Monster House") said getting the script to Murray "was not an easy prospect."

"There are so many stories out there, most of them horror stories, about getting (Murray) to work on films or of his on-set demeanor, but I have to say ... he had a real gung-ho attitude," said Kenan.

What drew Murray to the script when he received it was its writer, Caroline Thompson, who adapted Jeane Duprau's book. Murray met Thompson ("Edward Scissorhands") years ago and says "she works on a higher level than the rest."

"From my perspective, he's in a place where he's more open to things than he may have been in the past," said Kenan. "There's a lot in him. We've seen aspects of that on the screen now that he's had a career, but I actually feel like there's a lot more there that hasn't been seen."

Two years ago, Murray said he had taken to Jay-Z's idea of "retirement," meaning people might generally consider him out of the game but he could nevertheless continue to work here and there.

After the divorce, though, he's rallying to dedicate himself more fully.

"I've just come out of a sort of doldrums and I feel like I want to go," he said. "I want to work. I want to get going. I want to do a few things at once. I really want to connect with other people that are going that way and `Let's go'... I want to bounce off like a pinball. Like a pinball, I want to bounce off bumpers that are positive. I want to bounce off people that are positive and hope that'll make me more positive and give me momentum."

Earlier this year, Murray shot his third film with Jim Jarmusch, a thriller filmed in Spain titled "The Limits of Control." He also worked again with Wes Anderson ("Rushmore," "The Royal Tenenbaums") doing a voice for the animated "The Fantastic Mr. Fox."

His "City of Ember" co-star Robbins, who directed Murray in his 1999 film "Cradle Will Rock," recently asked him to be in his latest directorial effort. Said Murray: "I'll throw in."

The writers of "The Office" have been hired to pen a "Ghostbusters III," which Murray thinks could offer a fresh take on the films, the second of which he (and many others) found disappointing.

CAMPAIGN COMEDY

Monday's late-night TV wrap-up

NEW YORK (AP)—You'd hardly know the Democrats have even chosen a presidential candidate, judging from late-night comedy monologues. It was Republican John McCain and - oh, by the way - his vice presidential running mate, Sarah Palin, who claimed most of the jokesters' attention.

"John McCain's campaign has closed their offices in Michigan and they say they won't try to compete for votes there," noted NBC "Late Night" host Conan O'Brien on Monday. "Apparently this is part of McCain's strategy to try to win votes only in the original 13 colonies."

"John McCain blew off Michigan! Well, I know how they feel," said CBS "Late Show" host David Letterman. McCain canceled an appearance on Letterman's show two weeks ago.

"Maybe you've noticed that all of John McCain's problems began when he bailed out on this show. Are you aware of that? Well, the road to the White House runs right through here!"

Craig Ferguson, host of CBS' "Late Late Show," said that "at this point, it's a race to see what drops faster: the stock market or John McCain's poll numbers."

Of course, the stock market's plunge was a popular topic among the comics, with Letterman devoting his Top Ten list to "Ways to Make the Financial Crisis More Fun." Ranked in second place: "Enjoy the blank stare when Katie Couric asks Sarah Palin what the FDIC stands for."

He also poked fun at Palin's gaffe when, addressing a group Sunday, she referred to Afghanistan as "our neighboring country."

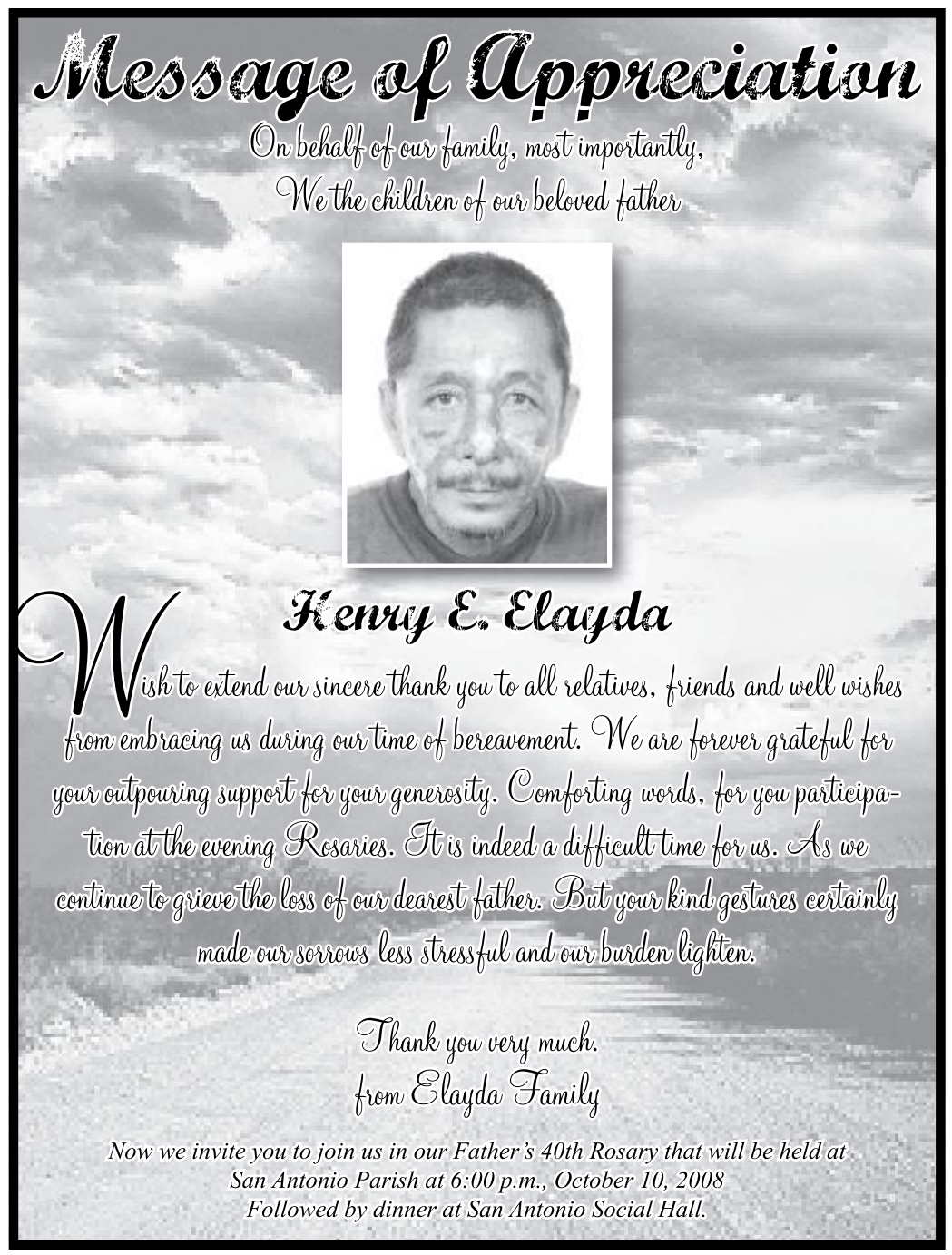
"Apparently," cracked Letterman, "she can see bin Laden's cave from her house."

On Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report," host Stephen Colbert took an approving look back at Thursday's vice presidential debate.

"Both candidates surpassed expectations," he said. "Sarah Palin proved she could speak. And Joe Biden proved he could STOP speaking."

And NBC "Tonight" show host Jay Leno called attention to a candidate for governor of Bangkok who assaulted a TV reporter for asking him tough questions on the air.

"Today Sarah Palin said, 'You can do THAT? Where's Katie Couric?'"


Message of Appreciation
On behalf of our family, most importantly,
We the children of our beloved father
Henry E. Elayda
Wish to extend our sincere thank you to all relatives, friends and well wishes from embracing us during our time of bereavement. We are forever grateful for your outpouring support for your generosity. Comforting words, for you participation at the evening Rosaries. It is indeed a difficult time for us. As we continue to grieve the loss of our dearest father. But your kind gestures certainly made our sorrows less stressful and our burden lighten.
Thank you very much.
from Elayda Family
Now we invite you to join us in our Father's 40th Rosary that will be held at
San Antonio Parish at 6:00 p.m., October 10, 2008
Followed by dinner at San Antonio Social Hall.

A-list women celebrate their own in Hollywood

AP

Anne Hathaway arrives at Elle's 15th annual Women in Hollywood event in Los Angeles on Monday, Oct. 6, 2008.

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—In the year of "Sex and the City," perhaps it's no surprise that an event honoring women drew some of the biggest names in Hollywood.

Nicole Kidman, Jane Fonda, Jennifer Lopez, Diane Keaton and Halle Berry joined dozens of other stars in a ballroom at the Four Seasons Hotel on Monday for Elle magazine's 15th annual Women in Hollywood tribute, honoring seven noteworthy women in entertainment.

Fonda served as an informal entertainment ambassador before the program, chatting up actress Kat Dennings and introducing Amber Tamblyn to Shirley MacLaine. Meanwhile, the evening's host, Chelsea Handler, shared laughs with Jenny McCarthy and Cheryl Hines. Other guests included Kate Beckinsale, Courteney Cox, Eva Mendes, Angie Harmon and Cheryl Tiegs.

Elle's annual dinner pays tribute to women "who are telling our stories" in Hollywood, said editor Roberta Myers. This year's honorees included Berry, Fonda, Kidman, Anne Hathaway, Sigourney Weaver, Isla Fisher and director Catherine Hardwicke - all of whom are featured in the magazine's November issue.

"Someday hopefully it won't be necessary to allocate a special evening to celebrate where we are and how far we've come," Weaver said. "Someday women writers, producers and crew members will be so commonplace, and roles and salaries for actresses will outstrip those for men, and pigs will fly."

Though things have improved for women, "we do have a long way to go," she said.

Hathaway said in today's Hollywood "women are about so much more than how they look."

"I think it's pretty remarkable that, at 25, I'm able to say that my role as a woman in Hollywood is purely as an artist, not a cause," Hathaway said. "I'm free to play my characters as I imagine them, far beyond what size jeans they wear."

Fisher thanked "my baby daddy SBC" (Sacha Baron Cohen) and paid homage to Kidman, "who paved the way for all us Aussies."

MacLaine continued the praise.

"Nicole Kidman has been a revelation to me, and it's not easy for me to be revelated," she said, calling Kidman "my star child."

Kidman thanked all the directors who "molded" her, particularly Anthony Minghella and Sydney Pollack.

"They were men in Hollywood who loved women," she said.

Fonda thanked all the women in the house - and Hollywood itself. "Aren't we glad we're not bankers," she said. "We are in the most fantastic business."

Esquire names Halle Berry the 'sexiest woman alive'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Alongside a photo spread that shows her in little more than a T-shirt, Halle Berry talks about being the sexiest woman alive, a title Esquire magazine gives her in its November issue.

"I don't know exactly what it means, but being 42 and having just had a baby, I think I'll take it," says Berry, who gave birth to her daughter, Nahla, in March.

"Sexiness is a state of mind - a comfortable state of being," she says. "It's about loving yourself in your most unlovable moments."

But Berry, who won an Oscar for her role in "Monster's Ball," can't claim the sexiest-woman honor all to herself.

"I share this title with every woman, because every woman is a nominee for it at any moment," she says.

AP

Honoree actress Halle Berry speaks during Elle's 15th annual Women in Hollywood event in Los Angeles on Monday, Oct. 6, 2008.

A rejuvenated Maxwell returns after 7-year break

NEW YORK (AP)—It's hardly unusual for a singer to drop off the musical map. Declining album sales, drug habits, legal woes and other dramas have landed a multitude of chart-toppers on the "Whatever Happened To ..." list.

Yet it is unusual to find someone who voluntarily takes a break from the business—and happily so, with no tabloid fodder behind it. So Maxwell - one of the key voices from R&B's neosoul era, with a sensual voice that made hearts melt and knees buckle—understands why people were so puzzled when he disappeared from the spotlight after releasing his last album, "Now," in 2001.

Maxwell

"The world is so caught up in the `American Idol' idealistic sort of tendency in regards to just thinking that this whole thing is what everybody wants, but it doesn't help you make a better record," the platinum-selling singer says. "I just wanted to kind of be a regular person for a minute, and not have to live up to anything from before."

Maxwell still doesn't have a new album: His fourth CD, "Black Summers' Night," isn't due out until at least February 2009. But he is returning with a new tour, during which he will play to crowds hungry to hear his voice after his long absence. (Numerous dates are sold out.)

"I'm amazed. I just did not expect after all this time that people would even care," says the 35-year-old singer, looking more mature and refined than he did in his bohemian heyday, sporting a conservative dapper look with black shirt, vest and pants.

"It so humbling ... that something that was done, that started in 1996, could even have any weight or any consideration in 2008," he says. "It means more to me than I can tell you. It's such a validating experience—it's validation at its highest, you know."

But one of the reasons why Maxwell decided to take a break from the business was so that he could find his validation from somewhere other than the record charts. Looking there would have given his ego a boost: From the time the New York native made his debut in 1996, he was a sensation with hits like "Sumthin' Sumthin'," "Fortunate," "Lifetime" and "Ascension (Don't Ever Wonder)." His three studio albums - "Maxwell's Urban Hang Suite," "Embrya" and "Now" - each sold more than 1 million copies. He had a strong fan base, and his poster-boy looks didn't hurt his popularity either, with his then-freeflowing Afro part of his signature look.

But personally, Maxwell felt stunted from the constant media glare.

"People failed to realize that when you're living such a hyper, super reality of a life, where you're just doing shows and you're on TV and you're talking to this magazine, that doesn't bode well for trying to talk about everyday stuff that hopefully you'll connect with people on," he says. "So a lot of my absence was based on just going out to get life experience, you know. Becoming a guy, becoming a man. I'm 35 years old now. In your 20s you're just a sketch of what you think you're trying to be."

So he grew up. He traveled, he hung out with friends, had a couple of long-term romantic relationships, and just enjoyed life.

"He took the time he needed to warm his soul," says singer-songwriter Leon Ware, who wrote "Sumthin' Sumthin'" and worked with Maxwell on the new CD. "The process of growing is very serious to him and he's very analytical."

Leigh's 'Happy-Go-Lucky' could extend Oscar touch

TORONTO (AP)—Director Mike Leigh has a knack for putting relatively unknown British actresses into Academy Awards contention, as he did with "Secrets & Lies" and "Vera Drake."

His latest find is Sally Hawkins, who co-starred in "Vera Drake" and Leigh's "All or Nothing" and now delivers an enchanting lead performance in "Happy-Go-Lucky," the director's charmer about a woman whose unshakable faith in the world is put to the test.

The role earned Hawkins the best-actress honor at February's Berlin film festival and brought her stellar reviews in Great Britain, where "Happy-Go-Lucky" opened to great acclaim in spring, with critics proclaiming it an Oscar-worthy performance.

"I can't think of anything better than Sally being nominated, which is not impossible. We've been there before," Leigh, 65, said in an interview alongside Hawkins at September's Toronto International Film Festival.

"Happy-Go-Lucky" played in Toronto in advance of its U.S. theatrical debut Friday, the film nicely positioned as Hollywood rolls into awards season. Similar timing helped put 1996's "Secrets & Lies" and 2004's "Vera Drake" on the Oscar radar.

Travis Barker thankful to be alive

NEW YORK (AP)—Former Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker, who always has been afraid of flying, says he's glad to be alive after suffering severe burns in a fiery plane crash last month.

"I hate planes," Barker said in an interview with Us Weekly magazine. "My biggest fear ever is to be involved in a plane crash, so when that happened ... well, I'm just thankful to be alive! I'm just grateful to be here at all."

The 32-year-old musician and celebrity disc jockey DJ AM were the only survivors of the crash just before midnight Sept. 19 at the main airport in Columbia, S.C. Two pilots and two other passengers were killed, including Barker's assistant Chris Baker.

Barker was released from a Georgia hospital last week and is now being treated at a burn center in Los Angeles. He said he was too afraid to fly cross-country, so he arranged to travel by bus with his father and ex-wife Shanna Moakler to keep him company.

AP

Drummer Travis Barker appears onstage during MTV's "Total Request Live" at the MTV Times Square Studios, in this Nov. 17, 2006 file photo in New York.

"I am doing the best I can possibly be," he said in the magazine's latest issue. "I'm so anxious to get out of here. ... I've just been in surgery after surgery. I have third-degree burns basically from my feet up to my waist and both hands. One of my hands has second-degree burns and one has third-degree burns."

"I'm trying to have a quick recovery and play the drums again and be able to hold my kids again," said Barker, who has two children, Landon, 5, and Alabama, 2, with Moakler.

If all goes well, Barker expects to leave the hospital within two weeks.

DJ AM (real name: Adam Goldstein) was recently released from the hospital, too. Doctors have said they expect both men to fully recover.

Officials with the National Transportation Safety Board have said a cockpit voice recorder revealed that crew members thought a tire blew out and tried to abort the takeoff.

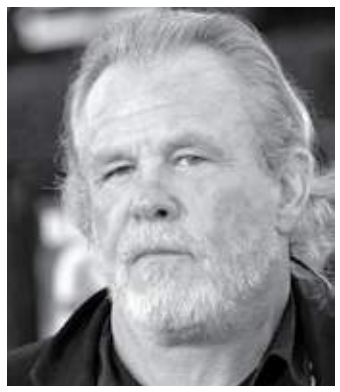
Nick Nolte escapes his burning home

MALIBU, Calif. (AP)—Actor Nick Nolte jumped out a window and used a hose to fight a fire that broke out in his Malibu home Tuesday, authorities said.

The 67-year-old actor scraped his arm and inhaled some smoke but was not hospitalized, said Los Angeles County fire Inspector Sam Padilla.

"He is seeing his private physician" for the injuries, he said.

The fire was reported at 11:34 a.m. at Nolte's secluded Bonsall Drive home. The electrical fire started in the living room, and Nolte smelled the smoke from an upstairs bedroom, said fire Inspector Frank Garrido.



Nolte

The Sheriff's Department said Nolte broke a window to escape.

Garrido said he then grabbed a garden hose and tried to extinguish the fire.

It took firefighters about 26 minutes to douse the blaze, which damaged a portion of the home, Garrido said.

The fire caused about $3 million in total damage, half of it structural damage and half damage to the contents of the home, including "collectibles, artwork, the furniture," Garrido said.

Nolte's publicist, Arnold Robinson, said in an e-mail that there was no one was injured.

Nolte has appeared in such films as "The Prince of Tides," "Affliction," "Down and Out in Beverly Hills" and "Tropic Thunder."

Duchovny checks out of sex addiction rehab

NEW YORK (AP)—An attorney for David Duchovny says the actor has checked out of a rehabilitation facility for treatment of sex addiction.

Duchovny, who plays a sex-obsessed character on Showtime's "Californication," voluntarily entered the facility in late August.

Duchovny

Says lawyer Stanton Stein: "David has successfully completed his rehabilitation, he is out of rehab and will be starting a movie soon."

Duchovny starred as the conspiracy-minded Fox Mulder on "The X-Files" TV series and in two films.

The 48-year-old actor and his wife, actress Tea Leoni, have two children. The couple married in 1997.

Chef DiSpirito keeps 'Dancing'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Rocco DiSpirito will serve seconds on "Dancing with the Stars."

The celebrity chef came in last place on the ABC dancing competition, but he wasn't dismissed because injured contestant Misty May-Treanor dropped out of the competition Monday. The two-time Olympic beach volleyball gold medalist had surgery Tuesday to repair her Achilles' tendon that was torn while rehearsing a jive routine Friday.

"I think Misty had the potential to get all the way through to the final," said judge Len Goodman.

The other celebrities remaining in the competition are model-actress Brooke Burke; former Oakland Raiders defensive lineman Warren Sapp; singers Lance Bass and Toni Braxton; Olympic gold medalist Maurice Greene; actresses Cloris Leachman and Susan Lucci and actor Cody Linley.

In this image released by ABC, Karina Smirnoff and her partner Rocco DiSpirito perform Monday, Sept. 29, 2008 on "Dancing With The Stars," in Los Angeles.

AP

Court denies appeal in Spears' driving case

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Britney Spears may have to stand trial for driving without a valid license after all. A three-judge panel in Los Angeles on Tuesday denied a motion by Spears' attorney seeking a delay in the trial and a possible reduction in the charge.

Spears' attorney, J. Michael Flanagan, did not immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

The move was not unexpected. Flanagan said after a recent hearing that the court might reject his filing and that he would appeal a conviction in the case. Spears is not expected to appear during the case.

She is scheduled to go to trial later this month. She was charged with not having a valid California license after she hit a parked car in August 2007 and left the scene.

Tourette syndrome could be cause of man's nervous habits

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I am writing regarding the letter from "Sniffled Out in Indiana" (July 18), who complained about the noises her co-worker made throughout the day. True, her co-worker may suffer from an allergy or chronic post-nasal drip, but it is also possible that he has Tourette syndrome. This is a neurological disorder, the symptoms of which can include excessive throat-clearing, sniffling and other vocalizations (verbal tics), as well as eye-blinking, facial-grimacing and shoulder-shrugging (physical tics).

Most people know only the stereotypical Tourette image they see presented on TV shows and in the movies of someone shouting, cursing and thrashing about. The average person usually does not realize that most people with TS suffer from mild symptoms that are often misinterpreted as "annoying habits." This lack of understanding and education about Tourette syndrome on the part of the general public is one of the greatest obstacles for people who have this condition.

JILL IN TITUSVILLE, N.J.

DEAR JILL: Thank you for educating me—and, by extension, my readers. You and the other individuals who took the time to write have taught me some things I didn't know. Among them, that the Tourette Syndrome Association is a reliable resource for learning about this often misunderstood subject. Its Web site is www.tsa-usa.org. Read on:

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My son has Tourette. Any uncontrollable, repetitive sound or movement can be a sign of it. If people ask my son why he does what he is doing or have comments about it, he will explain what it is and that he can't control it.

If a person with Tourette is asked about it, he or she can "stop" it for a while because he or she is concentrating. But once the person's attention is diverted elsewhere—such as by work or TV—it can start again.

I hope "Sniffled Out" will help her co-worker. It's possible he does just need tissues and some medicine, but if it's Tourette, he will need her help. It's difficult to be a part of a group when you know you're annoying them.

OPEN-MINDED IN LAS VEGAS

DEAR ABBY: The fact that her co-worker could suppress his symptoms for a time could mean the person has a form of Tourette syndrome. Tourette syndrome consists of both vocal and motor tics lasting more than six months.

Treatments are available, including medication and cognitive behavioral therapy (among others) that have been shown to be very helpful for some patients. However, other people's acceptance and understanding is perhaps the most important factor in their improvement.

JOEL P. SUSSMAN, M.D., COLUMBIA, S.C.

DEAR ABBY: You and your readers should know that Tourette syndrome is a protected disability under the Americans With Disabilities Act, and requesting that he "stop it" would be discriminatory. His co-workers may not know about it because he isn't required to disclose his disability to them, nor can his supervisor, if he wishes it to remain confidential. No one should assume that it's a bad habit. Trust me in stating that a Tourette sufferer truly wishes it was, because bad habits can be broken—tics cannot.

T.S. MOM IN TEXAS

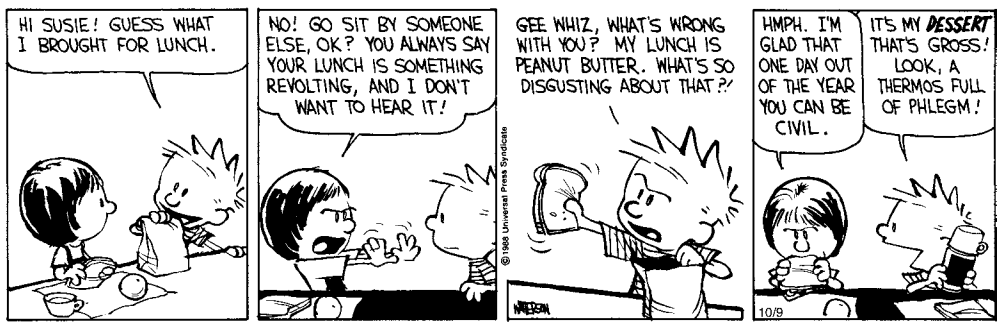
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." To order, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

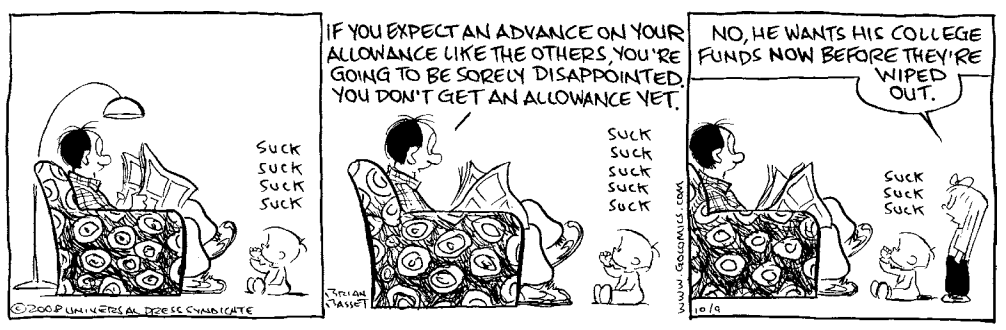

HI SUSIE! GUESS WHAT I BROUGHT FOR LUNCH.
NO! GO SIT BY SOMEONE ELSE, OK? YOU ALWAYS SAY YOUR LUNCH IS SOMETHING REVOLTING, AND I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT!
GEE WHIZ, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? MY LUNCH IS PEANUT BUTTER. WHAT'S SO DISGUSTING ABOUT THAT?!
HMPH. I'M GLAD THAT ONE DAY OUT OF THE YEAR YOU CAN BE CIVIL.
IT'S MY DESSERT THAT'S GROSS! LOOK, A THERMOS FULL OF PHLEGM!
10/9

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


SUCK SUCK SUCK SUCK
IF YOU EXPECT AN ADVANCE ON YOUR ALLOWANCE LIKE THE OTHERS, YOU'RE GOING TO BE SORELY DISAPPOINTED. YOU DON'T GET AN ALLOWANCE YET.
SUCK SUCK SUCK SUCK SUCK
NO, HE WANTS HIS COLLEGE FUNDS NOW BEFORE THEY'RE WIPED OUT.
SUCK SUCK SUCK
10/9

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Galvanizing material
5 Recent horror film franchise
8 Invitation initials
12 Hydrox look-alike
13 Ante-
14 Duel tool
15 Ham's dad
16 Real estate ad abbr.
17 "Phooey!"
18 Clothe
20 Ordeals
22 Vast expanse
23 Crow's cousin
24 Three-piece suit feature
27 Rule out
32 Mischievous tyke
33 Kreskin's claim
34 One side of the Urals (Abbr.)
35 The "who" in a whodunit
38 Bohemian
39 A Gershwin
40 Hostel
42 Changes
45 Snacked (on)
49 Mideast strip
50 Comical sort
52 Path left behind
53 Finished
54 Hearty brew
55 Divisible by two
56 Indiana city
57 Standard
58 Take five

DOWN

1 Region
2 Press
3 Approach
4 Kelly, to Regis
5 Butter knife, e.g.
6 Branch
7 Into the sunset
8 "Automatic" telephone feature
9 One sitting carelessly
10 Osso buco meat
11 Household members
19 Exist
21 Vitamin stat
24 Energy
25 Ostrich's kin
26 Wine + soda water
28 British verb suffix
29 Type of spaniel
30 See 47-Down
31 Ironically humorous
36 Glum
37 Listener
38 Response
41 "Fuhgeddaboudit!"
42 Enthusiastic, plus
43 Stromboli outpouring
44 Trade
46 Possess
47 With 30 Down, supplements
48 Fender bender result
51 Carte lead-in

Solution time: 25 mins.

C	U	D	S	■	H	A	M	■	S	V	E	N
O	R	E	O	■	E	V	A	■	A	W	R	Y
C	D	B	U	R	N	E	R	■	I	B	I	S
O	U	T	R	E	■	■	X	Y	L	E	N	E
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W	O	K	■	P	E	N	N	E	■	L	A	P
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■	■	O	V	A	■	C	H	A	R	■	■	■
A	P	R	O	N	S	■	■	M	A	G	M	A
L	O	R	D	■	T	V	D	I	N	N	E	R
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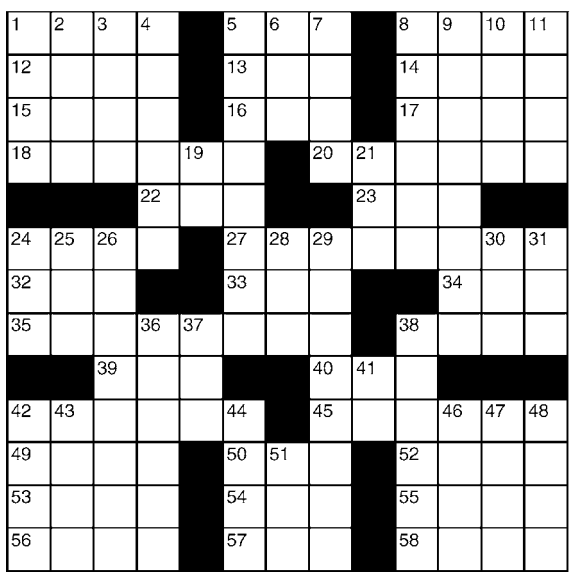
Yesterday's answer 10-9



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Zachery Ty Bryan, 27; Steve Burns, 35; Scott Bakula, 54; Tony Shalhoub, 55

Happy Birthday: Everyone is waiting for you to take action and put your plans into play, so gear up for the future. Your actions will lead to an offer, helping you jumpstart your own concerns. Don't let love cloud your vision. Move away from people who dance to a different beat. Your numbers are 9, 11, 16, 21, 28, 34, 46

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You'll have the backing you need to do what you want. It's a good time to get involved in a project that has interested you for some time. Working alongside creative people will open your mind to many interesting concepts and possibilities. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't give in to someone who is being demanding or leaning on you too much. Keep relationships with friends, family and colleagues balanced. A love connection will take you on a wild goose chase. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Take the lead and you will be able to hold on to it. You can set yourself up for the future by creating a demand for what you have to offer. Use your expert way of expressing your ideas, needs and intentions and you will capture interest. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Love is on the rise and, if you please the one you love, there will be perks in it for you. Use action, not words, to show everyone how much you really do care. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't be talked into something you don't want to do. Someone you love may not be fair or honest about his or her likes, dislikes and whereabouts. Stay calm. You can outsmart anyone today if you refuse to overreact. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Open up regarding your intentions and you will fit right into someone else's plans. This is not the day to be lazy, especially if you want to prove a point or cut a deal. Be business savvy and don't give away too much. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You are in the right place at the right time and no matter what you are trying to pull off, you should be able to make it happen. A new friendship or partnership will develop suddenly with someone you least expect. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Protect yourself—don't let your confidence be beaten down. Stand behind your goals. You have more going for you than you realize, so don't back away or deep-six your plans. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Don't be confused by someone who keeps changing his or her mind. Go it alone. The demand you create will temper anyone who tries to take over or gets in your way. Put a love incident on the back burner for now. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Look for the information you need and you will find it. You may not like what you hear but you will be able to compensate and find solutions. Try to spend a little time with the people who have always supported your goals. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): You'll find it difficult to sit still and probably shouldn't if you want to avoid an argument. Put your energy into worthwhile ventures. Rid yourself of the negative influences and surround yourself with people who believe in you. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Hidden matters will keep you guessing. Do not put your money on the line unless you have all the facts. A good partnership can be formed but be sure you both have a clear idea of what's expected. ✪✪✪

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

2			9			7		
							9	6
	3		4	2				
					4			
1		8				6		7
			3					
				3	6		5	
7	9							
		6			1			8

Difficulty Level ★★★ 10/09

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

8	1	2	7	3	5	4	9	6
7	3	9	6	4	8	2	1	5
5	4	6	2	1	9	7	8	3
2	5	8	9	7	3	1	6	4
3	6	1	4	8	2	5	7	9
4	9	7	1	5	6	3	2	8
1	7	5	8	6	4	9	3	2
6	2	3	5	9	7	8	4	1
9	8	4	3	2	1	6	5	7

Difficulty Level ★★★ 10/08

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

AIRPORT SECURITY LINES **Solution: 6 letters**

E	S	Y	A	L	E	D	E	H	C	T	E	R	T	S
T	N	U	P	L	A	C	E	G	A	S	S	A	P	S
S	H	I	P	S	T	O	P	P	A	G	E	L	E	N
E	N	E	T	P	S	K	N	A	R	N	I	U	X	O
T	N	A	A	U	O	A	T	T	O	T	E	G	T	I
L	A	A	C	D	O	R	F	I	N	U	E	E	E	T
U	S	G	L	S	A	R	T	E	Q	S	G	R	N	U
F	C	E	N	V	E	C	M	N	G	E	A	G	S	A
S	R	T	E	Q	E	E	H	C	S	A	G	N	I	C
S	E	L	U	P	C	O	F	E	E	R	G	I	V	E
E	E	E	S	R	L	T	X	E	N	C	A	G	E	R
R	N	N	O	D	S	M	E	T	I	H	(B)	G	U	P
T	I	F	Y	H	T	G	N	E	L	S	S	(A)	H	L
S	N	O	I	T	C	I	R	T	S	E	R	L	(G)	S
E	G	N	I	D	R	A	O	B	Y	P	A	S	S	(S)

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Baggage, Bags, Boarding, Bypass, Delays, Enforcement, Extensive, Fees, Frequent, Hassle, Headache, Hold, Inspection, Items, Lagging, Lane, Lengthy, Lines, Luggage, Next, Passage, Patience, Place, Precautions, Queues, Rank, Regular, Restrictions, Routine, Safe, Scans, Screening, Search, Split, Stoppage, Stressful, Stretched, Support, Test, Travel

Yesterday's Answer: Shots

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FAX: (670) 234-1251

Attorney for Petitioner
THERESITA BAZA-PERTUDO

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In The Matter of the Adoption of **LEI RUSSEL PERTUDO, a minor child,** By, **THERESITA BAZA-PERTUDO,** Petitioner.	FCD-AD CIVIL ACTION NO. 08.600 **NOTICE OF HEARING**

TO: ALL INTERESTED PERSONS

Notice is hereby given that Theresita Baza - Pertudo has filed a verified Petition for the adoption of minor child Lei Russel Pertudo in the Commonwealth Superior Court. The original petition is available for review at the Office of the Clerk of Court at Susupe, Saipan Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Law Office of Danilo T. Aguilar, P.O. Box 505301, First Floor San Jose Court Bldg., Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way, San Jose Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A hearing on the above-entitled matter will be held on November 6, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. in the Superior Court, Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Dated this 2nd day of October, 2008.

/s/ CLERK OF COURT

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Baylor out as Clippers executive

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Elgin Baylor is out as vice president of basketball operations with the Los Angeles Clippers, and coach Mike Dunleavy will assume his responsibilities as general manager.

Dunleavy said Baylor had decided to resign after spending 22 years as an executive with the team.

"We greatly appreciate Elgin's efforts during his time with the Clippers, and we wish him the very best," Clippers owner and chairman of the board Donald T. Sterling said in a statement issued Tuesday.

The 74-year-old Baylor became vice president of basketball operations with the Clippers in 1986 after an outstanding 14-year playing career with the Lakers and a brief stint as coach of the New Orleans Jazz.

He was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1976, chosen as one of the NBA's 50 greatest players during the league's 50th anniversary celebration in 1997, and named the NBA executive of the year following the 2005-06 season.

The Clippers have been one of the NBA's least successful franchises over the years, but they beat Denver in the first round of the playoffs following the 2005-06 season and extended the Phoenix Suns to a seventh game in the second round before being eliminated.

The Clippers also announced that Neil Oshley, the team's director of player personnel, will be elevated to the position of assistant general manager.

"In Mike and Neil, we're fortunate to already have talented people in place to make this transition a seamless one," Clippers president Andy Roeser said. "Going forward, we have high expectations for our team. From a basketball standpoint, these are the people we're counting on to make those expectations a reality."

AP

In this Oct. 1, 2007, file photo, Los Angeles Clippers general manager Elgin Baylor speaks during the NBA basketball team's media day in Los Angeles.

Dunleavy, about to start his sixth season as coach of the Clippers, has manned dual roles before; he was the coach and vice president of basketball operations with the Milwaukee Bucks from 1992-96.

"About a week or 10 days ago, I was approached by the team about being named the general manager," Dunleavy told The Associated Press. "The sense was there was a chance that Elgin might resign. Basically, they were trying to figure it out as soon as possible. They had made Elgin a couple different offers about going forward, and he had until Monday to make a decision on it.

"Today, Andy Roeser came to me and said they were going to go forward with this, that Elgin had resigned, and they were going to name me the general manager and Neil Oshley the assistant general manager."

Dunleavy said he hadn't seen Baylor for nearly a month, since the funeral of longtime Clippers physician Dr. Anthony F. Daly, who died Sept. 5.

"I enjoyed my time working with Elgin, it was a good working relationship," Dunleavy said. "I wish him all the best. The way we've done business the last couple of years, we've all worked together to go forward with whatever made the best sense for us, and we'll continue to move forward."

The Clippers have 10 new players under contract this season, led by Baron Davis, Marcus Camby, Ricky Davis and first-round draft pick Eric Gordon. They will join holdovers Chris Kaman, Cuttino Mobley and Al Thornton.

"I think we've got a really good group and they'll play well together," said Dunleavy, whose team was beset by numerous injuries last season, finishing with a 23-59 record. Elton Brand later signed with the Philadelphia 76ers as a free agent, and Corey Maggette joined the Golden State Warriors.

The Clippers were eliminated from playoff contention on the final day of the 2006-07 season, finishing with a 40-42 record.

Oden makes strong preseason debut for Blazers

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Greg Oden announced his delayed arrival to the NBA with a dunk two minutes into the preseason.

Oden debuted to a standing ovation, as did the rest of the young Portland Trail Blazers, in a 110-81 exhibition victory over the Sacramento Kings on Tuesday night. Oden finished with 13 points in just under 20 minutes.

Oden was the No. 1 overall pick in the 2007 draft, but his rookie season was postponed when he needed microfracture on his right knee. He was held out all of last season.

One young fan held a sign that read: "Welcome to the show No. 52."

Except for two summer league games after he was drafted, Oden hasn't played much since he averaged 15.7 points and 9.6 rebounds in his lone season at Ohio State. He led the Buckeyes to the national championship game, scoring 25 points and grabbing 12 rebounds in the loss to Florida.

Oden won the opening jump over Sacramento's Mikki Moore. His dunk, two minutes into the game, was Portland's first basket.

Oden wowed the near-sellout crowd with another couple of dunks in the second quarter. Fans booed when he was called for a foul.

Both teams gave their reserves plenty of work, as usual in the preseason, but also because of injuries.

AP

Sacramento Kings Spencer Hawes has his shoot blocked by Portland Trail Blazers Greg Oden (52) in the fourth quarter of a preseason NBA basketball game Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2008, at the Rose Garden in Portland, Ore.

The Kings, who traded veteran Ron Artest to Houston in August, were without Kevin Martin, who has tendinitis in his right quadriceps, and Brad Miller, who strained his right quadriceps on Friday.

The Blazers were without point guard Steve Blake, who has a sore left hamstring.

Brandon Roy, who had arthroscopic surgery on his left knee in August, played a little more than 23 minutes and had 14 points and seven assists for the Blazers. Martell Webster led Portland with 15 points.

Donte Greene, acquired from Houston in the Artest deal, had 18 points and Francisco Garcia added 12 for the Kings, who led by as many as 11 points in the first half before the Blazers seized control.

Besides Oden, Blazers fans also got their first look at Spanish guard Rudy Fernandez, who played the past seven seasons for DKV Joventut Badelona of the Spanish ACB League.

Fernandez, who played on the Spanish Olympic team that lost to the United States in the gold medal game in Beijing, was flashy offensively and effective defensively in his first NBA game.

NBA BRIEFS

Woman charged with stalking Lakers' Luke Walton

MANHATTAN BEACH, Calif. (AP)—A woman has been charged with stalking Los Angeles Lakers forward Luke Walton. Stacy Elizabeth Beshear of El Segundo was arrested Sept. 18 after she pulled up to his car and pretended to fire gunshots at him with her hand, police Sgt. Steve Tobias said. The 34-year-old Beshear has pleaded not guilty to a misdemeanor count of stalking. A Nov. 6 trial date has been set in the case. She faces up to a year in county jail if convicted, district attorney spokeswoman Jane Robison said Tuesday. A phone number for Beshear was not in service. Walton said Beshear has been harassing him since late last year. He told the Orange County Register she waited outside his Manhattan Beach home numerous times and wrote on his car with a marker after he refused to sign an autograph. "When she pulled up to my house and started yelling at me after she fired a fake gun at me, I couldn't help but to start yelling back at her," Walton said. "She was in my driveway. But when we were interacting, I could tell by the stuff she was saying that she's not all there in the head—which makes me feel bad for her. "At the same time, most people who go on killing sprees are people who aren't all there in the head."

Lakers open preseason without Jackson

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Los Angeles coach Phil Jackson missed the Lakers' preseason opener against the Utah Jazz on Tuesday night because of soreness and swelling in his lower legs. Assistant coach Kurt Rambis ran the team in place of the 63-year-old Jackson, who remained home and watched the game with his legs elevated. Jackson has been experiencing discomfort for the past few days and was examined on Monday by a team doctor. "We don't anticipate that it's anything serious at all," team spokesman John Black said. Rambis told reporters that Jackson's condition wasn't any cause for alarm. "I found out after the morning shootaround and I was kind of shocked, but I think he's going to be OK," said Rambis, who replaced Del Harris as head coach for the final 50 games of the 1998-99 campaign before Jackson arrived from Chicago the following season. Jackson, whose nine NBA titles as a head coach are tied with fellow Hall of Famer Red Auerbach, got the Lakers within two victories of another championship last June.

Jamison leaves preseason opener with knee injury

DALLAS (AP)—Washington Wizards forward Antawn Jamison left his team's preseason opener against the Dallas Mavericks with a sprained right knee. Jamison's leg buckled while playing defense midway through the first quarter Tuesday night, and he had to be helped to the locker room by teammates. A team spokesman said Jamison was out for the rest of the game. The two-time All-Star averaged 21.4 points and 10.2 rebounds in 79 games for the Wizards last season. Washington is already without Gilbert Arenas, another of its top players, because of a knee injury.

Magic pick up option on guard Redick

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—The Orlando Magic picked up their $2.8 million option on former Duke star J.J. Redick for next season. Redick has struggled to work his way into the backcourt rotation and last season asked for a trade. He was the first guard off the bench in the Magic's loss to Atlanta in the preseason opener Monday, scoring 12 points, and drew praise from coach Stan Van Gundy for his play in practices. Redick, the team's first-round pick in 2006, originally signed a two-year deal with two one-year options. He's making $2.1 million this season. Calls to Redick's agent, Arn Tellem, were not immediately returned.

Westphal hired as Mavs' EVP of basketball operations

DALLAS (AP)—Former NBA head coach Paul Westphal was hired as the Mavericks' executive vice president of basketball operations on Monday. Westphal, who was a Dallas assistant coach last season, will assist general manager Donnie Nelson and work in scouting. When Westphal was hired before last season to be on former coach Avery Johnson's staff he had been out of the NBA since being fired as Seattle's coach 15 games into the 2000-01 season. He had a 267-159 record as coach for Phoenix (1992-95) and Seattle (1998-2000), leading the Suns to the 1993 NBA finals in his first full season. Westphal was already under contract with the Mavericks this season, but wasn't part of new coach Rick Carlisle's staff. Westphal won an NBA title as a player with the Boston Celtics in 1974 and was a five-time All-Star. He was Pepperdine's head coach from 2001-06.

Bosox-Rays renew rivalry, Manny in middle of NLCS

By BEN WALKER
AP BASEBALL WRITER

Exactly why the Boston Red Sox and Tampa Bay Rays tangle so much is hard to tell. Blame it on a high-and-tight pitch here, a hard slide there. Whatever, this much is true: The teams playing in the AL championship series sure get into a lot of scraps. "There's no hatred," injured Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling insisted Tuesday in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

"It's more a combination of talent/personalities and place than anything, I think. For years Tampa Bay was looked down on and the Sox were one of the powerhouse teams. The start to respectability is as much an attitude as it is talent and a few years ago the Rays, I think, got tired of being pushed around," he wrote.

That's kind of how Sarah Palin sees it, too.

"I know that earlier some of the experts this year were kind of tough on the Rays. I've been there," the Republican vice presidential candidate said Tuesday during a speech in Clearwater, Fla. "But what a difference a season can make, and now the Rays, in the playoffs for the first time ever."

Even before their rise to prominence, the Rays were plenty feisty. They've scuffled with the Red Sox at least a half-dozen times this decade, punctuated by a wild brawl at Fenway Park in June that resulted in eight players getting suspended.

"You know, we've had some good battles with them all year," Boston pitcher Jon Lester said.

Other matchups in the majors get more attention, be it Yankees-Red Sox or Cubs-Cardinals or Dodgers-Giants. But there is no baseball rivalry that's more spirited than Tampa Bay-Boston.

Funny, know who was often in the middle—somehow—of those slugfests?

Manny Ramirez.

Yep, the same slugger who's now the main man in the NL championship series between the Los Angeles Dodgers and Philadelphia Phillies.

Ramirez, manager Joe Torre and the Dodgers open the best-of-seven set Thursday night at Citizens Bank Park.

Traded from Boston to Los Angeles on July 31, Ramirez reprised his role as a one-man October wrecking crew in the first-round sweep of the Chicago Cubs. The 2004 World Series MVP went 5-for-10 with two home runs and four walks.

"He could fight a bear with a stick and win," praised Phillies broadcaster Gary Matthews, MVP of the 1983 NLCS when Philadelphia beat the Dodgers.

Coming off their victory over wild-card Milwaukee in the opening round, the Phillies are aiming for their first championship since 1980. Torre, no stranger to the postseason, is hoping to lead Los Angeles to its first title since 1988.

The defending champion Red Sox and the Rays begin Friday night at Tropicana Field. James Shields is likely to start Game 1 for Tampa Bay—he hit Coco Crisp with a pitch on June 5, triggering the bench-clearing fracas in Boston.

Shields and four other Rays were suspended, while Lester and two other Red Sox players were penalized. A day after the fight, Tampa Bay manager Joe Maddon hardly backed down.

AP

In this June 5, 2008, file photo, Tampa Bay Rays pitcher James Shields, right, takes a swing at Boston Red Sox's Coco Crisp after Crisp was hit by a pitch and charged the mound in the second inning of a baseball game in Boston.

"I want to be very clear: I defend everything our guys did," he said then. "I feel actually proud of the way we handled the situation that was presented."

Before the season began, Maddon's team showed it would not be intimidated. Twice it got into scrapes with the Yankees in spring training—back when they were 200-1 underdogs to win the World Series.

The trouble between Tampa Bay and Boston dates to 2000, when Pedro Martinez hit Gerald Williams with his first pitch of the game. Williams rushed the mound, a brouhaha ensued and a slew of players were suspended.

In 2002, 2004 and 2005, Tampa Bay and the Red Sox tangled after pitches either hit or were thrown near Ramirez. After the last of those three scraps, Schilling said then-Devil Rays manager Lou Piniella was trying to turn his team into "a bunch of tough guys."

These days, Schilling said, the clubs are not bitter enemies.

"There are very few players left from the earlier times. The dustups we've had since I have been here have mostly been due to the competitive nature of the games more than anything," he wrote. "There are a lot of players involved that know each other and are good friends, so much like the Yankees and us."

Schilling doesn't foresee any brawls in the next week or so. He'll sit this one out following shoulder surgery.

"The game results are far more important than any egos involved, so no," he said. "I've already seen the Coco/Shields match three times today. This series, these teams, are bigger than that."

The ALCS matchup was set Monday after the Rays beat the Chicago White Sox in four games and Boston eliminated the Los Angeles Angels in four.

While Boston will try to win its third championship in five years, the 100-win Angels can put away their postseason bunting. In fact, that's what doomed them—a botched suicide squeeze by Erick Aybar in the ninth inning.

"I thought it was a good situation for us," manager Mike Scioscia said. "It didn't work out."

High-flying Los Angeles Angels flop again in October

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—They were baseball's best over the long, hot summer. Then came October, and another big chill. The Los Angeles Angels seemed to have it all: a powerful lineup strengthened by newcomers Torii Hunter and Mark Teixeira, an impressive rotation headed by John Lackey, and a bullpen anchored by record-setting closer Francisco Rodriguez.

They won 100 games for the first time in franchise history, with eight of those victories coming in their nine meetings with the Boston Red Sox, and baseball observers praised the Angels as a team that did the little things correctly.

All that wasn't enough.

The teams with the best record in each league both flopped in the first-round, with the Chicago Cubs (97-64) swept by the Los Angeles Dodgers.

For the third time in four years, the Angels went cold against the Red Sox in the first round of the playoffs, this time often freezing up with men on base. They managed to win just one game against the team that has become their postseason nemesis, and their hopes of bringing the series back to Anaheim for a fifth and deciding game essentially ended with a failed squeeze bunt, of all things.

"We played much better this series than going back to '04 or '07 against them," manager Mike Scioscia said.

Indeed, since they were swept by the Red Sox in the first round in both those years. The Angels' 5-4, 12-inning victory in Game 3 this year is their lone win in the last 13 postseason contests against Boston dating to Dave Henderson's momentum-turning home run for the Red Sox off Donnie Moore in Game 5 of the 1986 AL championship series.

"How can this keep happening?" Angels infielder Chone Figgins wondered.

Los Angeles won the AL West in four of the past five years, only to be eliminated three times by the Red Sox in the opening round and by the Chicago White Sox in the 2005 ALCS. The Angels made their only trip to the World Series in 2002, when they were a wild card, and beat San Francisco in seven games.

Owner Arte Moreno and general manager Tony Reagins face some big decisions: Do they exercise options on Vladimir Guerrero ($15 million), Garret Anderson ($14 million) and Lackey ($9 million). Do they try to re-sign Teixeira, who was brought in for the last two months of the season and is eligible for free agency? Do they attempt to keep Rodriguez, who set a major league regular-season record with 62 saves but gave up a game-deciding, two-run homer to J.D. Drew in Game 2.

The Angels may be willing to let Rodriguez go because Jose Arredondo has shown he could take over the closer's role. Rodriguez is likely to command a five-year deal worth at least $75 million on the free-agent market.

"This has been my family for 10 years. I would love to stay here for many years. I don't know what's going to happen," Rodriguez said.

Dissecting the Angels' latest postseason flop would seem to seem to boil down to one telling number—43. That's how many runners they stranded in the four games while scoring only 13 runs.

It wasn't that the Angels weren't hitting. Their hits just weren't producing runs.

Rather amazingly, Teixeira and Guerrero each went 7-for-15 (.467) and provided a grand total of one RBI, by Teixeira. Hunter was the exception in the heart of the order; he went 7-for-18 and drove in five runs.

Among the disappointments at the plate were Howie Kendrick (2-for-17 with no RBIs) and Anderson (3-for-19 with no RBIs).

Then there was the Angels' squeeze that failed in the ninth inning of the concluding game Monday night, when Erick Aybar missed his bunt attempt and catcher Jason Varitek tagged out Reggie Willits.

"Erick is one of the best bunters we have," Scioscia said, "and it didn't work out."

Bonds says he's enjoying life away from baseball

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Barry Bonds made a rare public appearance Tuesday and said he is enjoying life away from baseball. "I'm happy now that I have more time," Bonds told the crowd at the kickoff event of the Macy's Christmas tree lighting. "I've actually enjoyed myself immensely."

Bonds, honorary chair of this year's lighting, did not talk to reporters and left quickly after giving a brief speech during the 30-minute ceremony. Lights adorning the large tree in Union Square are sold to benefit the UCSF Children's Hospital palliative care program, and nearly $700,000 has been raised during the past five years.

Bonds was questioned by a young patient about potentially returning to baseball.

"I had fun," Bonds said. "But I like my freedom."

Bonds has donated time and money to the program, hosting golf tournaments and visiting patients and their families. He passed out autographed baseball cards of himself and politely chatted with several patients, many confined to wheelchairs.

"We all go through adversities and tragedies," Bonds told the crowd, which greeted him with a standing ovation. "It takes every one of us to stick together to make all of our children's times as precious as we can."

The tree lighting ceremony is scheduled for Nov. 28.

Bonds pleaded not guilty to 14 counts of making false declarations to a federal grand jury and one count of obstruction of justice, and his trial is scheduled to start March 2. Bonds is accused of lying when he said he never knowingly used performance-enhancing drugs during 2003 grand jury testimony.

The 44-year-old Bonds hit 762 homers, seven more than the previous record set by Hank Aaron.

New Giants managing partner Bill Neukom said Tuesday the team hasn't decided whether to erect a statue in the slugger's honor as it has done for Hall of Famers Willie Mays, Willie McCovey, Juan Marichal and most recently Orlando Cepeda.

"I think that we all need to be respectful of what Barry Bonds has done for baseball and for this team over the course of his career," said Neukom, who took over for Peter Magowan last week. "We all need to permit the legal process to play out with regard to the pending case involving Barry Bonds. And where we go in the future with Barry Bonds will depend, to some extent, on the future.

"I think there will be other opportunities for Barry Bonds and the Giants to find common ground."

Alaska scores come-from-behind victory

MANILA, Philippines—Willie Miller couldn't convert a basket at endgame but grabbed a crucial loose ball as Alaska Milk completed a stirring 85-84 come-from-behind win over San Miguel Beer in the KFC PBA Philippine Cup at the Astrodome Sunday night.

The Aces overcame an early 19-point deficit for a triumphant debut in the all-Filipino tourney where they finished fourth the last time behind the Sta. Lucia Realtors, the Purefoods Giants and the Red Bull Barakos.

Miller muffed two three-point attempts and missed on a drive in the final minute but himself clinched the victory for the Aces as he grabbed the loose ball after two missed free throws by Jeffrey Cariaso with seven seconds left to play.

Desperately fouled by a San Miguel defender with five-tenths of a second left, Sonny Thoss, missing the front-end of his charities, deliberately bungled his second shot for the final count.

"We want to be the top free-throw shooting team this year but I don't think it's gonna happen," laughed Alaska coach Tim Cone.

The Aces shot 46.2 percent from the stripe, with the Beermen far better, hitting at a 93.3-percent clip.

The Aces, however, banked on a torrid field-goal shooting as they came charging back from a 19-point deficit to pull the rug from under the Beermen, who set out as among the top favorites to win the crown.

"I would say it's a good fightback for us. We're shell-shocked on how the way Bonbon Custodio and Jonas Villanueva came out. We'd lost huge energy level but we made a big fightback," said Cone.

The Aces used a swashbuckling run late in the third period to get back into the game then hung tough the rest of the way.

"It's a kind of game you couldn't give your new guys the opportunity to get the feel of the game. But I do believe Joe Devance is gonna be a huge factor for us," said Cone.

Devance, acquired by Alaska from Rain or Shine for Solomon Mercado and Eddie Laure, played 24 minutes, contributing four rebounds, two points, one assist and one steal.

Ervin Sotto and Kelvin dela Pena were kept on the bench.

Larry Fonacier, John Ferriols and Tony dela Cruz teamed up in a 15-2 closing run in the third as Alaska drew within four, 59-63, going into the payoff period.

After playing catch-up basketball from the early goings, the Aces finally regained the lead at 65-63 on back-to-back three-pointers by Jeffrey Cariaso and Fonacier to start the final canto.

San Miguel jumped the gun on Alaska and took the half at 48-39 on a searing offense spiked by a perfect shooting by Villanueva.

The former FEU mainstay was 2-of-2 from the three-point land, 1-of-1 from the two-point zone and 2-of-2 from the stripe to lead the Beermen with 10 points in the first 24 minutes of play.

Villanueva actually put in all those efforts right in the first quarter which ended at 31-16 on San Miguel's favor.

The Beermen shot well from the field to make up for a poor rebounding in the opening half.

Alaska 85 – Miller 17, Dela Cruz 15, Fonacier 12, Ferriols 12, Hugnatan 11, Tenorio 7, Cariaso 7, Devance 2, Thoss 2.

San Miguel 84 – Custodio 14, Pena 13, Hontiveros 11, Villanueva 10, Seigle 9, Cortez 8, Gonzales 7, Pingris 4, Washington 3, Pennisi 3, Bono 2, Racela 0.

Quarterscores: 16-31, 39-48, 59-63, 85-84. ***(www.pba.com.ph)***

Bad boy Homer Se fined, sacked again

Santos also penalized; Arboleda ducks suspension

MANILA, Philippines—The Philippine Basketball Association Tuesday fined three Air21 players, including star forward Arwind Santos, a total of P46,000 on top of suspensions for varying unsportsmanlike offenses during the Express' stunning season-opening loss to new-look Rain or Shine last Sunday.

And in the case of one of the players, a previous infraction forced him to dig deeper into his pockets.

Express center Homer Se was meted a P20,000 penalty and a one-game suspension for swinging an elbow on the face of Mark Andaya during the second quarter of the Elastopainters' 120-102 rout of Air21 in a game which saw Santos and teammate Wynne Arboleda also get ejected.

Automatic suspension

Se, who has earned a reputation as a player who has no qualms of getting too physical, was called for a Flagrant Foul category 2 on the play, meriting him an automatic suspension under PBA rules.

The league also made sure Se would not forget a previous offense by ordering the 6-foot-5 power forward to pay an additional P12,000 fine for his Flagrant Foul 1 on Barangay Ginebra's Alex Crisano during the Express' 97-84 Game 7 loss in the Fiesta Cup Finals last August.

It marked the 11th time that Se was fined for his behavior on court, apart from a couple of two-game suspensions he was earlier slapped with.

The latest set of penalties increased Se's career total fines to P127,000.

Santos, fresh off his finest season, was fined P20,000, for elbowing Elastopainters rookie guard Solomon Mercado late in the fourth quarter.

Penalty for two technicals

Arboleda dodged suspension but was also made to pay a P6,000 penalty for his two technical fouls, the second drawing the ire of Rain or Shine's top rookie Gabe Norwood.

The stocky Arboleda made what looked like a clothesline tackle on Norwood that led to the Air21 guard's second technical foul.

"It will be tough playing without our key players," said Air 21 coach Bo Perasol, who will miss Se and Santos in the game against Talk N' Text on Thursday at the new Ynares Sports Center in Pasig City.

"As always, we will find a way." ***(PDI)***

FIBA

From Page 26

This program facilitates the capture of game statistics as they happen, and also webcasts this information live on the Internet. Data gathered is fully integrated with FIBA Organizer so competition and historical statistics can be updated after the game.

To access updates about the tournament, viewers just need to log to FIBA Oceania website, look for the tournament name and click LIVE.

But Steve Smith said that although the two softwares are valuable for records purposes, these could not change the outcome of the game.

He said errors can be made when making inputs on the computer, thus what actually happened in the game has more weight than what were recorded.

"Information gained through FIBA Organizer and the FIBA Live Stats are for backup purposes," Judy added.

Judy said FIBA Live Stats replaced Cybersports, which was previously used in the Micronesian Games.

Judy said Cybersports is quite expensive with one download package costing about $600.

"So now, if we have four people here doing the Cybersports, it will cost us $2,400. But with FIBA Organizer, anyone who wants to have an organized league can just download it from our website for free," Judy said.

For next year's Oceania caging, Judy said the CNMI will be needing at least 12 statisticians.

The two FIBA officials encouraged those who attended the workshop to talk to their friends and teach them how to use the software.

"When we get back here sometime in April, we hope more volunteers are already familiar with the software so they can help the CNMI run the tournament," Steve said.

The CNMI being the host island is already assured of a slot to the Oceania tournament. Nine other islands/nations will be competing for the remaining nine berths. The list includes Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, New Caledonia, Tahiti, Guam, Palau, Papua New Guinea, and American Samoa.

ACME

From Page 26

as they played a so-so game in the next two sets.

The team is composed of Jordan Igisomar, Wilton Laniyo, Cecile Nogis, Dionisia Hosono, Aemir Villegas, Champ Untalan, and Christian Hidalgo.

Earlier, Karakuchi scored its own masterful 21-14, 21-14, 21-14 win against MHS Oakies and extended its winning run to 3-0 and kept its hold of solo second place.

The loss was Oakies' second in four starts. They are now in sixth place ahead of seventh-running Off Twice, who has a lower number of sets won with four compared to Oakies' six.

MHS Peers posted another easy victory against MHS Serves Up!, 21-15, 21-15, and 21-9, as it climbed to solo third place with a 3-1 win-loss record.

MHS Peers improved their record to 2-1 to stay in fifth place behind fourth-ranked Enyophace, who has also 2-1 card. The two teams have also the same number of sets won but Enyophace compiled more points scored by a team with its 186 as against MHS Peers' 166.

In the fourth game, Thai One On struggled before getting the better of Off Twice in three sets, 21-10, 21-18, 21-17.

With the win, Thai One On barged into solo third with a 3-1 slate.

It will be a battle of unbeatens when Acme Roofing and Karakuchi battle it out next Tuesday, Oct. 14.

Before that, they will have to face separate opponents in today's resumption of play as they hope to keep their record clean.

Karakuchi will meet MHS Peers at 5:30pm while Acme Roofing will square-off with MHS Oakies at 6:30pm.

Two other games will be featured. Enyophace will take on MHS Serves Up! At 7:30pm, while Kimoichi will test Champ-on at 8:30pm.

FOUR

From Page 26

1966 and 1987.

Fiji hosted the inaugural SPG in 1963 with 13 island-nations and 646 athletes competing in 10 events.

Meanwhile, the Cook Islands Organizing Committee assured chef de missions of the 22 island-nations that facilities and venues will be ready before the Mini Games start.

A multi-sports complex is under construction and is expected to be completed in June next year. The multi-sports complex will be used for netball, weightlifting, and squash competitions.

The committee is also working on securing funds to build an all-weather track and field facility similar to the one located at the Oleai Sports Complex. For now, the track at the National Stadium in Tereora is made of grass.

Only 15 sports will be played in next year's Mini Games due to limited facilities.

The list include athletics, boxing, golf, lawn bowls, netball, rugby 7's, rugby league, sailing, squash, table tennis, touch, triathlon, canoeing, weightlifting, and lawn tennis.

The CNMI is skipping next year's Mini Games despite the last-minute inclusion of tennis in the calendar of events replacing body building.

The Commonwealth had netters interested in competing in Rarotonga, but the restrictive policy on the eligibility rules would not allow foreign-born Kana Aikawa and Ji Hoon Heo to participate in the tennis competition.

ROLLERS

From Page 26

anced scoring, Jerry Mabini was the lone bright spot for the Rollers II. He had 10 of their team's total output in the first half.

Mabini continued to lead the Rollers II and even scored 11 straight points in the closing minutes of the game.

But Mabini's one-man show was not enough to save the Rollers II from absorbing its seventh loss in the round robin regular season, as the Rollers I still managed to get outputs from its bench to overpower its foes.

Fredo Paez, who was scoreless in the first half, added nine in the second, Don Teregeyo chipped in seven after nailing only a point in the first 20 minutes of the match, and four other players made it into the scoreboard.

The Rollers I is already in the playoffs, while the Rollers II is out of the running. The seven other teams which are already assured of slots to the next round are the CNMI Junior Nationals, San Antonio Sixers, the Saints, the Kontenders, the Suns, the Sonics, and the G-Stars.

The remaining games in the regular season will be played until next week and organizers will start the single-elimination playoffs the following week.

The regular season was extended due to several players and coaches going off-island to compete in a tournament.

The CNMI Junior Nationals were in Guam last week for the 7th FIBA Oceania Youth Tournament. The FIBA caging featured teams from Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tahiti, Palau, and New Caledonia.

The Rufino Aguon-coached Junior Nationals placed sixth in the tournament and won over Palau, 100-90, and PNG, 93-84.

G-Stars mentor Jose Tumaquip called the shots for the CNMI cagebelles, who finished seventh after defeating Palau, 64-51.

Rollers I 58 – Paez 9, Matagolai 8, Aurelio 8, D. Teregeyo 8, Danas 7, Deleon Guerrero 7, A. Camacho 5, E. Camacho 4, Ogarto 2, Namelo 1.

Rollers II 46 – Mabini 21, E. Manglona 5, Santos 4, Deleon Guerero 4, M. Manglona 3, Norita 3, Babauta 2, Brennan 2.

Scoring by halves: 31-20, 58-46.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

LOCAL SCORES

NMIVA Standings

Acme Roofing	4	0
Karakuchi	3	0
Thai One On	3	1
Enyophace	2	1
MHS Peers	2	1
MHS Oakies	2	2
Off Twice	2	2
Kimoichi	1	2
MHS Serves Up!	0	3
Champ-on	0	3
MHS 67 Doh-Fins	0	4

Futsal teams looking for sponsors

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
CNMI female strikers in action against Guam during a futsal tournament in Hagatna. CNMI will open its own futsal league this Saturday.

The 2008 NMIFA Women's Futsal Fall League will kick off this Saturday at the Northern Marianas College Gymnasium with six teams vying for the championship.

All six squads will play on the opening day with Teams 1 and 2 colliding in the first match at 8:30am, Teams 3 and 4 battling in the second game at 9:30am, and Teams 5 and 6 dueling at 10:30am.

The rest of the schedule will be released later but the league is expected to conclude its inaugural season in the first week of December. The league will have a round-robin format in the regular season, while the format in the playoffs has yet to be decided.

The six teams, which have 10 members each, had already chosen their team captains with Jamie Beavis leading Team 1. Team 2's team captain is Krista Hawley, Elizabeth Henke for Team 3, Laura Williams for Team 4, Janel Villegas for Team 5, and Natalie Hill for Team 6.

But league organizers said only three teams have sponsors and the rest are still looking for generous individuals/companies that will help pay for their uniforms.

The league has two regular sponsors in Wild Bill's and the Law Offices of Matt Smith. The third one—Marine Tech International—is sponsoring a soccer team for the first time.

Williams, a member of the NMIFA Women's Committee, said the league is very grateful to Wild Bill's and the Law Offices of Matt Smith for their continued support to the sport, particularly to female players, and to Marine Tech for finding time and money to join the bandwagon.

She added support from interested individuals/companies for the three other teams without sponsors will be a big help to ensure the success of the inaugural league.

The Northern Mariana Islands Football Association will be holding a futsal league for the first time since sending a team to a futsal tournament in Guam last year.

Futsal is an indoor football game with teams having five players each on the court. It demands quick reflexes, fast thinking, and accurate ball control. Games are played in a basketball-style court, with no walls and a low-bouncing ball, requiring players to use their skill rather than the ball's bounce to propel it.

With female players on the island still new to the sport, NMIFA held a two-part boot camp on the Navy Hill Field last month and early this month.

The two weekend boot camp drew more than 40 participants with most of them playing in regular football tournaments.

"We want to say a big thank you to all the ladies who attended the boot camp to join the league and those who stepped up to lead their teams as captains," Williams said.

"The NMIFA women's league is open to all women age 15 years old and up and it is a great sport to build confidence and camaraderie among female players. The woman's soccer league is an excellent way to meet new people, get in shape, and have fun," she added.

Registration for Pre-Hell of the Marianas race opens

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

SAIPAN TRIBUNE
The Northern Mariana Islands Triathlon Federation will hold a 50-kilometer bike race on Oct. 19 that will serve as a warm-up for the Hell of the Marianas set later this year.

Registration is now ongoing for a 50-kilometer bike race that would serve as a warm-up for the Hell of the Marianas, the Northern Mariana Islands Triathlon Federation announced recently.

The fun ride around the spine of Saipan will be held on Oct. 19, covering the distance from Pacific Islands Club to the Radar Tower in Marpi.

Participants can compete with their road bike or their mountain bike. There will be male and female divisions.

From PIC, the bikers will go toward the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport, turn to Herman Pan Road and Isa Drive, then turn right for a downhill pass to Kagman Road via the Laolao Bay Golf Resort entrance.

They will return for an uphill and downhill passes along Isla Drive then turn to Chalan Talafofo to Kingfisher Golf Links entrance and ascend back to Isla Drive.

Then they finally descend from Capital Hill and turn right to Chalan Pale Arnold toward La Fiesta.

From there, they will turn right onto Mantasa Road in Chalan Matuis toward Radar Tower for the completion of the race.

Registration time for the pre-race of the Hell of the Marianas is set at 5:30am at the PIC parking lot. The send-off time for the riders will be at 6:15am.

Organizers informed all interested participants that they must fill up an application form and forward it by Oct. 15 or submit it personally to the PIC concierge desk.

Tournament rules will allow triathlon bikes, however, the use of tri-bars is prohibited for safety purposes.

Each competitor will sign an agreement and release of liability.

The release is intended to discharge in advance the promoters, the sponsors, promoting clubs, officials and any involved village, municipality, government agency, or other public entities (and their respective agents and employees) from and against any and all liability arising out of or connected in any way with the bikers participation in the race, ride or competition, even though liability may arise out of negligence or carelessness on the part of the person or entities mentioned above.

NMITF's Kanae Quinn said the bike ride would be free of charge but there will be PIC volunteers tracking every competitor's time, thus, everyone will make sure that he/she completes the entry form and return to her at the PIC concierge desk.

She is also reminding participants that there would be no available aid stations, so be sure to bring hydration gears or water containers.

Quinn said there would not be any truck returning to PIC. Anyone who don't want to ride back on his/her bike must arrange their own transportation, she said.

For more information, you may email kanaequinn@yahoo.com or dosm@picsaipan.com.

CWGA October ace this Saturday

The CNMI Women's Golf Association October Ace of the Month Tournament will be held this Saturday, Oct. 11, at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort west course.

According to the club's secretary Lorraine Babauta, show time is set at 11:30am and tee time is scheduled an hour later at 12:30pm.

Established in March 2007, CWGA is a nonprofit organization founded to promote, encourage, and introduce women to the sport of golf in the CNMI.

The organization intends to accomplish the following: 1. Promote civic and community interest in golf; 2. Establish and encourage competition and good sportsmanship; 3. Promote and provide social functions of the members and their families; 4. Promote youth golf activities; and 5. To do any or all things necessary and proper to accomplish its purpose and intention.

CWGA also commits its members to abide by a set of values that will further enrich a golfer's performance, attitude, and conduct—adopted form the USA Junior Golf Association.

The set of values members of CWGA are committed to faithfully are as follows: perseverance; sportsmanship; respect; honesty; judgment; responsibility; reliance; courtesy; and sincerity. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

PIC Thanksgiving Softball Tournament set next month

Teams can now register for the 15th Annual PIC Thanksgiving Softball Tournament organized and sponsored by Pacific Islands Club.

The event is set to be held from Nov. 14 to 16.

PIC sports manager Lindsey Sosovec said entry forms could be picked up at the PIC or at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Games will be played at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

The tournament will again feature teams from Guam, including defending champion PIC Guam and runner-up No Ka Oi, the 2006 titleholder.

There were 12 teams that competed last year.

Sosovec said registration deadline is set on Nov. 12. The entry is $180 per team.

The tournament will be a co-ed event, meaning two females must be on the lineup. The tournament format is a double elimination bracket.

For more information about the 15th Annual PIC Thanksgiving Softball Tournament, contact Cole or Lindsey at 235-6231 ext. 5147. ***(Nazario Rodriguez Jr.)***

Custom softball tourney set for Oct. 17-19

The Custom Goodwill Non-Profit Organization will hold a softball tournament from Oct. 17 to 19.

Teams interested in joining the event are requested to attend meeting scheduled for tomorrow, Oct. 10, at the pavilion behind Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium beginning at 6pm. Entry fee for the tourney is set at $150.

For more information, call Craig Sanchez at 483-3295 or Sam Salas at 285-7527. ***(PR)***

Futsal teams looking for sponsors

The 2008 NMIFA Women's Futsal Fall League will kick off this Saturday at the Northern Marianas College Gymnasium with six teams vying for the championship.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Baylor out as Clippers executive

Elgin Baylor is out as vice president of basketball operations with the Los Angeles Clippers, and coach Mike Dunleavy will assume his responsibilities as general manager.

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FIBA preps up CNMI for Oceania tourney

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

FIBA Oceania officials conducted a workshop aimed to prepare the CNMI for hosting the 2009 Oceania Tournament.

FIBA Oceania Secretary General Steve Smith and Judy Smith, the zone's administration manager, met with several volunteers Tuesday night at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium and demonstrated how to use the FIBA Organizer, FIBA Live Stats, and FIBA Website.

The two software systems will be used in the 2009 Oceania Tournament, which Saipan will be hosting in June, and any information regarding the tournament will be posted in the FIBA Oceania website and the CNMI basketball's own website.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

FIBA Oceania Secretary General Steve Smith, standing right, and FIBA Oceania Administrative Officer Judy Smith conduct a workshop in preparation for the CNMI's hosting of the 2009 Oceania Tournament.

FIBA Organizer is a new generation in sports administration software. It is designed as an administration and competition management package for sporting organizations. FIBA Organizer aims to fully computerize all facets of sport administration and to give sport administrators more time to perform other sport administration roles.

Its main features include easy to read schedules and standings, quick entry for results, membership management, transfer administration, tribunal administration, simple schedule generation, and detailed and customized reports.

In the workshop, Judy taught participants the three basic features that will be needed in next year's tournament, namely the scoresheet, schedule of games, and results.

The second part of the workshop focused on the FIBA Live Statistics.

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Acme Roofing, Karakuchi keep perfect records

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

With no difficulty picking up another win, early leaders Acme Roofing and Karakuchi maintained their perfect records in the ongoing 2008 Miller Lite Four-Person Beach Volleyball League at the Pacific Islands Club sand court.

Acme Roofing won its fourth victory over an undermanned MHS 67 Doh-Fins, 21-18, 21-7, 21-10, last Tuesday night and solidified its lead in the 11-team field tournament.

The young and spirited Doh-Fins zoomed to a 5-2 lead in the opening set before eventually caving in and suffered their fourth defeat in as many games.

Larry Sheri teamed-up with Elizabeth Henke, Jenni Brown, and Dana McFadden as Acme Roofing broke away from an 18-all count as they scored the next three points for the first set victory.

The other team members are Jazz Roscow, Rob Jordan, Luthor Taylor, and J.R. Ngeskebei.

Sheri's strong serves, including a couple of aces, did the heavy damage for the Doh-Fins, who failed to sustain their good start

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NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Acme Roofing's Dana McFadden serves in the first set of their game against the Doh-Fins in the 2008 Miller Lite Four-Person Beach Volleyball League Tuesday night at the Pacific Islands Club sand court.

Rollers I starts new winning run

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Rollers I continued its recovery in the 2008 Saipan Rotary Club Youth Basketball League, cruising to its second win in a row after downing Rollers II, 58-46, Tuesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Rollers I had a 2-0 start, but dropped its next three games, before ending its slide last week beating the Chalan Kanoa Saints, 60-44.

Like the Saints, the Rollers II was an easy prey for the Rollers I.

Brandon Aurelio hit two triples in the first half and had eight points, and coach Joe Diaz drew contributions from every player he fielded in the game putting the Rollers I to a 31-20 halftime lead.

Manny Matagolai added six in the first 20 minutes of the match, while three other players made at least two baskets to give the Rollers I an early control of the driver's seat.

While the Rollers I had a bal-

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Rollers I's Albert Camacho drives against a Rollers II player during their game in the Rotary caging at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Four express interest in hosting 2015 Pacific Games

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Four island-nations have shown an interest to host the 2015 Pacific Games.

The list includes Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, American Samoa, and Tonga.

The four island-nations expressed their willingness to host the 15th edition of the quadrennial meet during the Pacific Games Council General Assembly in Rarotonga, Cook Islands last month.

Formal bids should be submitted next year during the 2009 South Pacific Games, which will run from Sept. 21 to Oct. 2.

Of the four island-nations, only PNG had hosted the Pacific Games (in 1991). The Solomon Islands, American Samoa, and Tonga have hosted only the Mini Games.

Honiara hosted the inaugural Mini Games in 1981, Tonga in 1989, and American Samoa in 1997.

Rarotonga hosted the 1985 Mini Games and next year will be its second time to host the same event. Fort Villa in Vanuatu hosted the Mini Games in 1993, Norfork Islands in 2001, and Palau in 2005. Wallis and Futuna will host the 2013 Mini Games.

Last year's Pacific Games was held in Apia, Samoa while the 2011 edition of the Games take place in New Caledonia.

New Caledonia will host SPG for the third time having hosted the same event in

See FOUR on Page 26